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ABSTRACT

This collection of writings on the history and status of English language teaching (ELT) in China includes the following essays: "Historical Background" (Y. F. Dzau); "How English is Taught in Tertiary Educational Institutions" (Dzau); "Teaching English in Chinese Secondary Schools" (Yu Yining); "Teachers, Students, and Administrators" (Dzau); "XANADU--'A Miracle of Rare Device': The Teaching of English in China" (Alan Maley); "Production of ELT Materials for Chinese Learners--Evolution or Revolution?" (Li Guanyi); "In Defence of the Communicative Approach" (Li Xiaoju); "A Skill-Based Approach to Freshman English" (Yue Mei-yun); "The Design of a New Syllabus--A Case Report" (Yang Huizhong); "Intensive Reading: Some Practical Strategies" (Charles Meyer); "A Lesson to be Learned: Chinese Approach to Language Learning" (Paul Harvey); "A Theoretically Based Evaluation of Intensive Reading" (Roger Everett); "A Joint Venture in Guangzhou" (John Barnes); "The Role of the Language Teacher in Distance Education" (Shelagh Byron, Matthew Macmillan); "Developments in the Training of English Teachers, 1979-1989" (Helen Oatey); "'Doing What the Romans Don't Do': Advanced Teacher Training Courses in China" (Jane Sunderland); "Teacher Training in the PRC: Influence of Sociocultural Factors" (Helen Oatey); "Some Reflections on Advanced EFL Teacher Training in China" (Du Jinjiang); and "The Past and the Future" (Dzau). (MSE)

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Y.F. Dzau

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*This book is dedicated to
my wife, Reta.*

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Foreword

Matthew Macmillan

When I first went to China, in 1979, and had the opportunity to visit schools and universities, observe English classes and meet teachers of English, three things impressed me. The first was the enormous demand for English as an international language providing access to the world at large. The second was the enthusiasm that teachers and learners were bringing to the task of meeting that demand. And the third, sadly, was the ample evidence that the ten years of the Cultural Revolution had isolated teachers in China from those developments in the theory and practice of language teaching that had characterized the profession elsewhere.

Now, more than ten years later, the demand and the enthusiasm are even greater; and, at least in the major institutions, teachers of English are better informed about, and better trained in, appropriate methodological approaches to language teaching.

Over the past forty years, changes in professional attitudes towards the teaching of English have been closely related to changes in the political climate within China. In the early 1950s Russian was the principal foreign language taught. When, for political reasons, Russian fell out of favour, thousands of teachers of Russian were required to teach English instead. They brought to that task approaches to language teaching that had had their origin in the Soviet Union. Just before the Cultural Revolution, however, Western approaches to the teaching of English as a foreign language were beginning to make an impact and offer an alternative to the traditional grammar/translation method widely used by Chinese teachers. During the Cultural Revolution, of course, that impetus was lost. Since then, the impetus has been

Professor M. Macmillan was previously Principal of University College and Dean of the School of Arts, University of East Asia, and spent time in China with the British Council. He is currently consultant to East Asia Open Institute.

regained, largely as a result of the encouragement given to professional exchanges between Chinese teachers of English and their counterparts at all levels in the West.

Following the dramatic political events that have taken place in the communist world over the past twelve months, the teaching of English in China could be at yet another watershed. Encouragement given at the political level to the teaching and learning of a foreign language inevitably opens the door to cultural values expressed in that language. This is the dilemma facing the authorities in Beijing. Encouragement has been given, for pragmatic reasons, to the teaching of English: yet aspects of Western culture expressed in that language are viewed with suspicion and are resisted. After the clamp-down on the pro-democracy movement in China in 1989, will the recent resurgence of pro-democracy feelings elsewhere in the communist world induce the Chinese authorities to re-impose restrictions on the teaching and learning of English? Or will the professional progress that has been made since the Cultural Revolution be allowed, in the interests of 'modernization', to continue into the 21st Century?

I can think of no person better fitted than Professor Dzau to set the scene for future developments by reviewing the past and describing the present. Now teaching at the University of East Asia, he was educated at St. John's University, Shanghai, taught there from 1948 to 1951, and was then on the staff of the Foreign Language Department at Fudan University until 1984. His own career as a teacher of English coincides exactly with the period surveyed in this book — and has reflected the political and professional vicissitudes of that period.

This book, therefore, is timely and apposite. It should be of interest not only to those who practise the profession of language teaching, and of English language teaching in particular, but to all who are interested in the recent political and social background to contemporary China.

Preface

English, used by more countries and peoples than any other language for international communication, trade, cultural, educational and scientific exchange, is an essential instrument for China's modernization. In Mainland China and in the Macau-Hong Kong area, the people know that English is important for personal success in education and in their careers, as well as for personal advancement, job mobility and the future. As a result, a great deal of effort has been made to teach and learn English well. Chinese and foreign teachers have for more than a century tried hard to teach English to Chinese students efficiently and effectively, often with the hope that as a result of their efforts there can be better understanding and friendship throughout the world. All concerned wish that English language teaching and learning in China, as elsewhere, could be done better. Although there has been much discussion on ELT in China and many articles written it is not easy for Westerners to obtain detailed information.

This book tells the story of ELT in China, its achievements and the problems and factors that affect it — those that have aided its development as well as those that have made its development difficult. I hope that this book will be of interest to all English teachers not just because it is the story of ELT in a country with one quarter of the world population, involving an unprecedented international cooperative effort that has included many of the world's most respected linguists, textbook writers and teachers, and not just because it is the story of ELT in a country whose long history and rich culture is so different from that of native English speakers that the main attraction may be the experience of teaching across cultural barriers. Of course, these are valid reasons for interest in ELT in China; perhaps in no other country have political, economic, social and cultural factors combined so much to affect the teaching of English, but I hope that the main interest in this book comes from a desire to

understand these factors better, so that teachers and others concerned will be better prepared to deal with problems of how to improve ELT in China and elsewhere.

I hope that this book will achieve its main purpose: to provide teachers of English as a foreign language who are working in China or who wish to work in China, with information about ELT in China and about the historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors affecting this activity. In addition I hope that besides these teachers, others working in China or in cooperation with China will also be interested.

I also hope that this book will be of more general interest and help all friends of China to gain a better understanding, because this is the basis of constructive work and friendship. The study of ELT in China is the study of a microcosm that may contribute towards a better understanding of something bigger. There is a Chinese saying: "a sparrow may be small, but it has all the organs of a big animal."

I have spent more than 50 years studying and teaching English as a foreign language in the PRC. My father, Linson E. Dzau, founder and headmaster of Linson College in Macau, and my mother, Mae Sze Dzau, have both taught English in China as well as in Macau. Indeed, they were my first teachers. My grandfather, Francis Chin Te Dzau, a Portuguese citizen, was among the first group of Chinese students to go to the USA to study under Yung Wing, head of the Chinese Education Delegation and a famous Chinese educator during the Qing dynasty who originally came from Macau. Family reasons brought me to Macau, and my experience teaching English in University of East Asia as well as this background have proved invaluable in giving me a perspective and an insight into ELT in China. I wish to acknowledge gratefully my debt to my parents, teachers and colleagues both here at UEA and in China.

The idea for this book was developed from a course within the Master's Degree in Applied Linguistics at the University of East Asia, Macau, and was originally inspired by Professor Matthew Macmillan who was then the Principal of University College and Dean of the School of Arts. I would like to thank him for his help, advice and encouragement and for writing the foreword.

In addition, I would like to thank the contributors who wrote or revised articles especially for this book: Helen Oatey, Jane Sunderland, Hu Yining, John Barnes, Shelagh Byron and

Matthew Macmillan, as well as thank Alan Maley, Li Guanyi, Li Xiaojun, Yue Mei-yun, Yang Huizhong, Charles Meyer, Paul Harvey and Roger Everett, and where appropriate their respective publishers, for permission to include their articles in this volume. I would also like particularly to thank Christine Swales, Publishing Director of API Press Ltd. for editing the manuscript and for her advice and invaluable editorial support. In addition I acknowledge the secretarial help provided by UEA's Research and Finance Committee.

*Y. F. Dzau
Macau, May 1990*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Y. F. Dzau

When a new era of liberalization, progress and modernization was ushered in, under the leadership of paramount leader Deng Xiao Ping and with the support of the Eleventh Party Congress held in August 1977, the Chinese Communist Party made a momentous decision to open the doors of China to the world, and especially to the West.

In 1979, the set of four modernization programmes in agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology was incorporated into a larger system of 'building two cultures', firstly to build and modernize a 'material culture' (*wu zhi wen ming*) with the aim of four modernization programmes through advanced technology, loans, capital investment and help from the West; and secondly to build a modern 'culture of the socialist spirit' (*she hui zhu yi jing shen wen ming*) with the aim of modernization in the areas of law, education, economics and government. The Chinese Communist Party hoped that the building of these two cultures would enable it to realize the ultimate objective of creating a modern and prosperous socialist state.

The opening of China's 'door' and the possibilities for a rapid growth of production and trade, and for the development of a more reasonable social and economic system and a better life, aroused great enthusiasm among the people and, immediately, there was a tremendous growth in the numbers of people studying foreign languages, especially English, with Japanese following as the second most popular language. It has been estimated that 200 to 300 million Chinese are studying and using English out of a population of 1.1 billion. The reason is simple, the practical

Chinese people recognize that English is the key to a vast store of readily available knowledge. There is so much material available in all fields of knowledge — books, periodicals, research papers, and other materials stored in libraries and in databases — that people who want to have access to this knowledge for China's modernization must learn English as the key to this storehouse. Chinese students who want to go abroad to study, scholars, scientists, doctors, engineers and technicians who want to communicate with their counterparts abroad as well as businessmen, government officials and millions of ordinary people who want to communicate with people in the West, all started to study English, or take lessons to improve their English.

Studying English became prestigious — the vogue, the fashion, the rage, especially as doors of opportunity opened to those who knew English. Promotion and advancement depended on producing a certificate of proficiency in English. Better jobs with better pay became available in foreign-funded joint ventures which required a knowledge of English. Better business prospects opened up for people who knew English, as well as opportunities for study and travel abroad.

Sales of English textbooks soared and many of them were sold out soon after they appeared on the bookstore shelves. Millions of people followed English language lessons taught over the radio and television, tuning in to Voice of America's *English 900* and BBC's *Follow Me* which were broadcast from Beijing to the whole country. In addition many local stations offered English lessons at various levels by radio or television, sometimes even giving certificates after a test. Night schools, spare time schools, private schools and colleges sprouted like 'bamboo shoots after a spring rain' to teach English. State, municipal and provincial universities, colleges and schools, factories, government bureaus, various organizations, labour unions, hotels and big stores organized special classes and various intensive courses to teach English. There was a time when almost every other person you met in the streets of big cities studied English, and in cities like Shanghai and Beijing, 'English corners', a place in a park where people could meet and practise speaking English, grew spontaneously.

Government policy makers and officials and the people in general realized the importance of English to the modernization of the country as well as the importance to individual prospects. In this situation, it is inevitable that much serious effort was made

to use and develop the most effective materials and methods to teach English and to train the teachers on a national scale; the success of Chinese students studying abroad attests to the level of success of the ELT in China.

This effort and experience is of interest to all involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language in China, and to those interested in developments in applied linguistics in general, and to teachers, scholars and policy makers in this field all over the world. This experience is interesting and valuable for many reasons aside from the scale — a quarter of the world population is involved.

Firstly, it took place at a time when China opened its doors to the West, when the learners, the teachers and all levels of the government, academic administration and Party officials wanted English to be taught and learned well for personal advancement and material gain as well as for patriotic reasons of national modernization. The enthusiasm, desire, and determination for the English language programmes to succeed was there — real, strong and nationwide. Never in the nation's history had so much money, time, effort, equipment and materials been invested in English language teaching and learning, and never had so much international participation been involved in this effort.

Secondly, this effort occurred in a great nation with a long history of intellectual achievement. The teachers, advisers and students included some of the best in the world. Where foreign teachers and advisers were involved most of the classes included the best students, chosen from millions of applicants for the privilege of a college education. Surely, on the surface at least, here was a rare opportunity for teachers of English to show what can be done, for there were so many favourable conditions for success.

Thirdly, this effort occurred in a nation whose culture and language are very different from those of the English speaking world, indeed very different from the entire Indo-European language speaking world. Here is a challenge worthy of the best efforts of the world's linguists.

Fourthly, this effort occurred in China, a country where the prevailing ideology is communism, where the people are proud of its long and glorious history, its past achievements, its rich civilization and cultural heritage. Its people are also sensitive about its backwardness in science, technology and industry, its low living standards, its third world economy and 100 years of

imperialist aggression. In order to get the latest technology and science both the leaders and the people know that English must be learned and learned well, but what about the ideas that inevitably come into the country along with the language? This problem remains unsolved. An account of what happened during the whole period when China was unified, under a sovereign government committed to communist ideology with almost absolute powers to decide policy, is of relevance to EFL teachers and sociologists and any concerned with the problems that arise when a foreign language and its culture are brought into such a big country, and when people of different political and cultural backgrounds — foreign and Chinese teachers, administrators and students — cooperate to achieve success.

Fifthly, the favourable conditions, the enthusiasm of administrators, teachers and students, and the involvement of so many foreign linguists, scholars and teachers bringing with them the latest methodology and teaching materials all suggest great success, great improvement of ELT, widespread acceptance of modern ideas and quick adoption of new materials and methodology. Yet in fact progress in all these aspects has been slow, particularly the development of a consensus as to what should be the ideal methodology, or at least the basic principles guiding the solution of problems. In addition, as Maley noted in 1983, large numbers of foreign teachers — native speakers of English who went to China with enthusiasm and high hopes — returned "... with dampened enthusiasm, feelings of disappointment and in some cases bitterness and rancour". There is also dissatisfaction as the Chinese "... feel that many foreigners do not understand the Chinese context", and "... question the effectiveness of their [the foreign teachers'] teaching" (Chapter 6.3). There is a need for a total appraisal of ELT in China to see how the level could be raised.

This situation poses a question: how can we get a better understanding of the problem as it relates to ELT in China? It is obviously an opportune time for a review. China's policies over the past ten years have resulted in widespread investigation of methodologies, traditional and modern, past and present, proposed and practised in China. Nationwide discussions often sponsored by the government have taken place and different views have been voiced. The views of the work done in the past and present are now clearer than ever before and should be made known and studied for future work.

The removal of two architects of reform, Hu Yaobang, the former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, and Zhao Ziyang, the former Premier and Party General Secretary who replaced Hu, and the crisis at Tian An Men Square on June 4, 1989, show that China will now, most probably, enter a new stage when consolidation of gains achieved in the previous decade will be a major task and when much effort will be made to lessen internal tensions and solve the conflicts of interests and views. Hence, now is the appropriate time to examine the past to prepare for the future.

To give readers a better understanding of ELT in China and of the present situation facing teachers, it is first necessary to present a general picture. Chapter 2 therefore gives some relevant historical background, relates this to the history of ELT and shows how political, economic, social and other factors have affected its development, particularly during the five periods of development corresponding to the five periods in China's recent history, from 1949, the year of the establishment of the PRC, to 1989, the year of the June 4 crisis.

Chapter 3 then gives a more detailed account of how English is taught in China, not only how it is taught now, but also how it was taught in the past. Chapter 3.1 deals with ELT in tertiary educational institutions; Chapter 3.2 deals with ELT in average secondary schools. In a large populous country, it is naturally difficult to present a clear, comprehensive and accurate picture of ELT throughout China. What has been attempted is a generalization which gives a helpful starting point towards a better understanding, but readers should be aware that different methodologies, approaches and materials have been used at various times and in different places, and innovations have been carried out, especially in key universities. Chapter 3.1 describes the different courses: Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading, Listening Comprehension and Oral English as well as the materials and methods used. It also presents different views and criticisms of the Intensive Reading Course, which has been the core course for the past 40 years in most Chinese tertiary institutions.

Chapter 4 analyzes in more detail the political, economic, social and cultural factors affecting ELT, particularly how they affect the ordinary Chinese teacher, student or administrator, thus giving the foreign teacher or outside observer a clearer picture of what goes on in the mind of the Chinese, who so often appears

to be a puzzle to people of a different culture that the word 'mysterious' has been used to describe the 'oriental from the Middle Kingdom'.

Chapter 5 concentrates on the main problems of teaching itself and presents representative examples of attempts to solve these problems. It consists of a collection of articles, some previously published, which are especially chosen to show what teachers and linguists, both foreign and Chinese, have observed, thought and done to improve the quality of ELT in China.

It begins with Maley's article, *Chapter 5.1, XANADU — "A Miracle of Rare Device": the Teaching of English in China*. Alan Maley went to China in the early 1980s and his article is an admirable summary of the problems that existed in China up to 1979, the beginning of the period of Reform, Open Door and Modernization, and succinctly analyzes the causes. This article also goes to the root of many problems of misunderstanding: when native speakers go to China to teach English by calling attention to different interpretations of important words by foreign and Chinese teachers and the different concepts they represent.

A group of articles by three experienced Chinese teachers follows, they show three different but typical attempts to improve ELT. The first article, *Chapter 5.2, Production of ELT Materials for Chinese Learners — Evolution or Revolution*, by Li Guanyi shows attempts to make a gradual change in ELT material by the introduction of some features suggested by the communicative approach while retaining features of the traditional methodology most Chinese teachers have found to be useful and effective. The attempt is eclectic and practical in approach and probably represents the current thinking of a majority of Chinese teachers, those who have used a traditional methodology, largely grammar-translation with careful explanation and drill of word usage and sentence structures. What past experience has shown to be useful and necessary in ensuring that Chinese learners master the basic structures and the lexis is not thrown away but combined with communicative features in exercises which provide language structure practice in context, in interactive activities and in providing extra reading material, including useful authentic material to develop reading and other skills. The basic thought is to help students to advance from controlled interaction to spontaneous communication.

Chapter 5.3, In Defence of the Communicative Approach by Li

Xiaoju is included to show the concepts, problems, thoughts, concerns and worries of average Chinese teachers of English with regard to the communicative approach. The CECL project of which the author is director is an attempt at a thorough adoption of the communicative approach by a Chinese Foreign Language Institute and is repeated only in a few classes in key universities where there is ample support by qualified foreign teachers. Whether this kind of change in ELT in China will be undertaken by the average Chinese teacher of English remains to be seen. It may depend on retraining Chinese teachers.

The last article in this group, *Chapter 5.4, A Skill-based Approach to Freshman English* by Yue Mei-yun describes attempts to shift the focus from linguistic forms drilled by audiolingual methods to language skills, and efforts to bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence. The Nanjing University experiment made in 1983, represents a line of development from Intensive Reading courses which have adopted the audiolingual approach using largely a structurally based course book.

Chapter 5.5, The Design of a New Syllabus — A Case Report by Yang Huizhong concerns the syllabus for non-English majors which went through six drafts after widespread discussion by experienced teachers of English and shows the consensus reached in 1985 among administrative and educational leaders regarding the objectives, the content and methodological principles of tertiary level ELT, and shows how the thinking of leading Chinese teachers could determine materials development, and how classroom teaching in tertiary institutions could be carried out in the future. It shows that ELT thinking has made significant advances. For the first time, a syllabus is skill-based. The functional/notional approach is included in addition to the grammatical/structural syllabus with many skills set out in detail and quantified. However, Yang points out that many teachers in China need retraining before they may accept and decide to implement the new syllabus. Moreover, still newer and better course books need to be developed.

The next group of three articles, Chapters 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 are written by three foreign teachers and show in detail how these teachers worked in the period from 1984 to 1988 and made a positive contribution to ELT in China. These articles are helpful not only in showing how new ideas and advances could be introduced to China, made acceptable to Chinese teachers,

learners and Chinese institutions, and take root on Chinese soil, but also in showing their analytical, constructive and patient attitude which led these foreign teachers to study and understand Chinese ways of teaching and to recognize the Chinese point of view, their background and their needs, before trying out more efficient and effective methods and approaches.

Charles Meyer in *Intensive Reading: Some Practical Strategies*, shows how he introduced new methods and tasks for students. Paul Harvey in *A Lesson to be Learned: Chinese Approach to Language Learning*, discusses foreign attitudes to Chinese methods as well as the need for compromise, balance and a practical approach to promote steady progress with the least wastage. Finally, Roger Everett's article, *A Theoretically Based Evaluation of Intensive Reading*, highlights certain basic weaknesses in the Intensive Reading Course as it is still conceived and taught in many schools and universities in China so that effective changes for improvement could be made. These articles have been included to show that China has many real foreign friends who speak frankly.

The last two articles Chapter 5.9, *A Joint Venture in Guangzhou*, by John Barnes and Chapter 5.10, *The Role of the Language Teacher in Distance Education*, by Shelagh Byron and Matthew Macmillan, are included for two reasons. Firstly, to show how another form of cooperative effort, a joint venture, could be made in ELT and to show the factors that had to be considered to make such an effort workable; and secondly, to report on this new development in distance teaching. This is important because it shows a new way to teach English to people largely through self-instruction, who would otherwise find it difficult to take lessons. It also shows a way for the language teacher to provide guidance and help in self-study and utilize to advantage the Chinese learner's propensity to spend a lot of time studying by himself. The second of these two articles deals with the problem of the role of the language teacher and shows the cultural influences involved which obstruct the smooth introduction of a new methodology. It also shows how difficulties could be overcome by constructive proposals and by explaining patiently how alternative roles and other models of teacher-student relations could work to advantage.

Chapter 6 covers the important subject of teacher training and starts with a very well-considered and fairly comprehensive survey of the general situation in Chapter 6.1, *Developments in the*

Training of English Teachers, 1979–1989 by Helen Oatey, who was closely involved in teacher training at a centre in Shanghai, in Jiao Tong University, during the most fruitful years of reform from 1981 to 1988. This survey deals with needs, policies, programmes, course design, evaluation problems and recommendations. Chapter 6.2, *'Doing what the Romans Don't Do': Advanced Teacher Training Courses in China* by Jane Sunderland who spent 4 years teaching EFL and methodology in China, and from 1986 to 1988 worked on an Advanced Teacher Training Course at Shanghai International Studies University. She describes the content and structure of teacher training courses giving a good understanding of the issues related to methodology, course content, foreign involvement and objectives in the Chinese context.

Chapter 6.3, *Teacher Training in the PRC: Influence of Socio-cultural Factors*, by Helen Oatey, examines the influence of sociocultural factors which cause problems in interpersonal relationships and in teaching contexts, and shows how differing education perspectives on the perceived effectiveness of teaching causes problems, how a different sociocultural background results in differing approaches to language learning and different expectations of course content and teaching methodology, and yet they may be overlooked because of cultural blind spots and ethnocentricity.

Chapter 6.4, *Some Reflections on Advanced EFL Teacher Training in China*, by Du Jinjiang of Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute discusses two basic problems in teacher training: the trainee's language proficiency and the effect of socioeconomic factors on the motivation of the trainees. The second problem has become so important as a result of the socioeconomic developments in China in the 1980s that evaluation of the efforts of the teachers, the trainees and the administration, the training programmes and even the methods used must take these factors into account. These developments again show how political, economic, social and cultural factors — usually outside the concern of EFL teachers involved with academic matters — now have to be considered since they have such an important bearing on ELT in China. This has been repeatedly shown to be important throughout its history.

Finally, Chapter 7, *The Past and the Future*, looks at the future of ELT in China in the light of the past, particularly in view of the widespread speculation and doubts which have arisen

after the events of Tian An Men Square in Beijing.

It is hoped that this book will achieve its main purpose — to provide teachers of English as a foreign language with significant information about ELT in China and about the factors affecting this activity, with a view to a better understanding of their work in the context of a complex situation. It is also hoped that those with an interest in commerce and trade, business ventures, programmes of cooperation, scholars, students of history, interested tourists and all with a general interest in China may find this book helpful in understanding China better, because the basis of constructive work and friendship is such understanding.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background

Y. F. Dzau

BEFORE 1949

The Chinese people, proud of their civilization and nation, which for thousands of years they had viewed as the centre of the world — *all land under heaven* meaning all civilized land under heaven — would not have become seriously interested in studying and learning the language of the 'barbarians' if it had not been for their humiliating defeat in the Opium Wars of 1840–1842 and in a number of other battles with foreign powers armed with superior weapons. Patriotic Chinese and scholar-officials like Zeng Guo-fan proposed and supported the translation of Western books on science and technology and set up arsenals to make Western arms. They also proposed that Western methods, science, technology and scholarly works be studied, learned and used for national defence. And so, although there was massive resistance from the conservative scholar-class, a beginning was made in the study and learning of English and in the translation of Western books. At first the methods used to learn English strangely resembled the methods used to learn classical Chinese. There was stress on word study and grammar. Selected model texts were studied and analyzed. Translation was on a word for word basis, although these translations were difficult to understand and did not read like idiomatic Chinese, and there was also plenty of rote learning.

Later, with the establishment of primary, secondary and, still later, tertiary institutions of learning by Christian churches and missions, books and methods used in the West were introduced. Teachers, many of whom were missionaries, taught in English and

questioned students in English on the content of what was assigned. For example, at McTyeire's School for girls in Shanghai, a high school of 4 years modelled after those in the US, the teachers were mostly American Methodist missionaries, teaching subjects and using books similar to those used at home. Since there was so much exposure and communicative activity in English, the students learned fairly well.

Students in Chinese middle schools were not so fortunate as their teachers used the traditional approach of grammar-translation method with a lot of word study. Students who wanted to improve sometimes resorted to private tutors. Some of the more enterprising teachers used or experimented with the Berlitz method¹ and Harold E. Palmer's Direct Method². Most Chinese teachers, however, continued to spend a lot of time on grammar, often using Nessfield's *Grammar*³ as a textbook, combined with readers, or collections of what were considered as 'gems' or models of English. Western teachers, on the other hand, usually stressed practice in the target language, both in and out of class, as well as relatively more exposure to the language through wider extensive reading, and the use of English as a medium of instruction and for social intercourse. Although initially many Western teachers taught English almost as if they were teaching native speakers, and even confused their students by using texts where the vocabulary and sentence structures were only roughly graded to correspond to the student's stage of learning, the extensive exposure to the language through both the spoken and the written word and the good models of English offered by these teachers, consciously and subconsciously, for students to imitate, played an important part in raising the level of English proficiency.

The industry of the students and teachers should also be mentioned as an important factor. The efforts of the Western teachers in the mission schools paid off and resulted in graduates having much higher standards of English than graduates from most non-mission schools. Many of these graduates later became leading personalities in the various professions or were employed with good pay in various banks and business concerns, as well as in educational, medical, technical and research institutions. This in turn stimulated an even greater desire to learn English and led to greater numbers of people studying the language.

Efforts to improve the effectiveness of English language teaching and put ELT on a more scientific basis began with the

introduction of the works of Otto Jespersen⁴, Harold E. Palmer, Michael West⁵ and Edward I. Thorndike⁶. These efforts were redoubled when Thorndike's *The Teacher's Word Book* and his dictionary with indications of word frequency and Michael West's *General Service List* (published in 1936 as the *Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection*) became available. Later, when sets of books, written in simple English and graded according to word frequency and structure became available, there was further effort to improve ELT effectiveness on a wider scale.

As trade with the West increased and expanded and as students went abroad to study on an increasing scale, more and more Western ideas came into China. Although some conservative members of the Chinese upper-class had been disturbed by this influx after the establishment of the Republic in 1911 under Sun Yat-sen, China had been going through a period of warlordism and civil war and could not address the problem. By 1930, China was more or less stabilized under the Nationalist Government led by Chiang Kai-shek, and in 1934-1936, the leaders of China's Nationalist Government launched the 'New Life Movement' to revive Confucianism and old moral virtues and values in schools and through extensive publicity campaigns. This was designed to give the Chinese people an identity and something positive with which to counter the Western ideas and culture that were sweeping China, and almost changing it as the leaders feared.

Although these efforts did not directly affect the teaching of English, nor did they solve fundamental problems of China's adaptation to modern life, nor lead to the development of an enlightened and constructive policy towards the problem of the Western influx, they did result in alienating young intellectuals, for example Lu Hsun and other left-wing writers, who gradually accepted Communist leadership in literature, particularly, and in political direction, generally. So, even in this early period of the Republic, we can observe the influence of politics and the conflict of cultures on the Chinese people and on education. But the Nationalist leaders did not establish a tight system of thought control and China was still able to produce some very fine dramatists, writers and artists.

FIVE PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1949

The development of English teaching in China after 1949 can be divided into five periods corresponding to the five periods of development in its history from 1949 to 1989. These five periods are:

1949–1953, *The Period of Consolidation of Power and Economic Recovery*

1951–1956, *The Period of Learning from the Soviet Union*

1956–1966, *The Period of Independent National Development*

1966–1976, *The Cultural Revolution*

1976–1989, *The Period of Reform, Open Door and Modernization*

1949–1953, CONSOLIDATION OF POWER AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

For the country as a whole, the first period between 1949 and 1953, was the period of reconstruction and economic recovery from the effects of many years of civil war. For the ruling Communist Party, it was the period of consolidation of political power. Land reform, completed in 1952, brought the Chinese Communist Party the support of the peasants, and the 'Three Anti's and Five Anti's Campaign' — Three Anti's against corruption, waste, bureaucratism among government cadres and civil servants, and Five Anti's against bribery, tax-evasion, cheating in labour or materials on government contracts, theft of state assets or secrets among private business men — brought better discipline to the government cadres, and established the absolute authority of the Party over the business world. The 'Thought Reform Movement' brought the intellectuals into line. In education, private schools and colleges were merged with public schools and colleges in the 'Reorganization and Merger of all Schools, Colleges and Universities', and all educational institutions were placed under the control of the Ministry of Education, so that future generations of Chinese would be loyal to the Communist Party and the emerging socialist state.

In ELT, teachers were asked to purge their courses of all colonial or imperialist influences and compile and use new textbooks which reflected the liberation of the people under the leadership of Chairman Mao Ze-dong and the Chinese

Communist Party, and which praised the greatness of the progressive peoples of the world, especially in the Soviet Union. Attention was primarily given to political content not to methodology.

In brief, this was the transition period that prepared the nation for the First Five Year Plan.

1951-1956, LEARNING FROM THE SOVIET UNION

The second period lasted roughly five years, from 1951 to 1956. The overlapping was due to the fact that China covers a vast area and has a population of hundreds of millions of people, and it took time for government policy to be implemented in the more remote areas, and for cadres to be trained to carry out these policies. This period is marked by the slogan "Learn from the Soviet Union!" and attempts to persuade the people to accept this policy with the slogan: "The Soviet Union of Today will be China's Tomorrow!"

This was the period of economic and technical aid from the Soviet Union. The country was to be built up according to plan and the First Five Year Plan (1953-1957) was made after consulting the Soviet model. Soviet loans were negotiated to finance many of the major projects; Soviet 'experts' came to give technical aid as well as general guidance. The plan was to build 1600 major projects, 700 in industry, including 156 big projects to be started with Soviet aid, to make steel, tractors, trucks, generators, ships, and equipment for heavy industry.

This was also the time of the Korean War; known as the 'Fight America and Help Korea Movement', the 'collectivization' of agriculture was begun and there was reform of intellectuals through short term physical labour on farms and in factories. Another political movement, the 'Anti Hu Feng Movement', further consolidated power in Mao's hands and rid the country of reactionaries, counter-revolutionaries and dissidents.

The Russian language naturally became the most important language. The number of classes teaching English in secondary schools and colleges was drastically reduced on a nationwide scale and replaced by classes teaching Russian, particularly in the Northeast, where Russian teachers were readily available. English language courses and English Language and Literature as a major or specialty were, however, preserved in key universities and

foreign language institutes, but with the number of students greatly reduced. Many English language teachers had to learn and teach Russian. And all language teachers, especially teachers of English language and English and American Literature had to "Learn from the Soviet Union".

Soviet 'experts' were consulted, Soviet theory, methodology and practice were studied, and Soviet textbooks were used. Soviet methodology and material turned out to be adaptations of the grammar-translation method and, simply, the result was an English language course called *Intensive Reading*. This became the main course of English language instruction in China, with other courses, such as Extensive Reading, Oral English, Grammar, Composition, Listening Comprehension, considered as supplementary. This is still characteristic of many syllabuses used in China.

The Intensive Reading Course is based on a short text, graded according to structures, a grammar syllabus and vocabulary, and most of the teaching is concentrated on a list of language points drawn from the text. These concern grammar, vocabulary or use of words and structure and their mastery is the objective for both teachers and students. The teacher spends a lot of time explaining in detail the meaning and use of words, and making a grammatical analysis of selected sentences of the text, with certain points of structure singled out, drilled and consolidated usually through translation of a series of unconnected sentences, with occasional translation of a passage containing these structures and words. Hence basically the method used is the traditional grammar-translation method.

To carry out this policy of learning from the Soviet Union, textbooks and methods formerly used in English language classes in mission schools and universities as well as former teachers of these schools were criticized for whatever imperialist or colonialist influences that could be found. In this way all resistance and opposition was cleared. For example, at Fudan University, Palmer's Direct Method was singled out for criticism and branded as imperialist and colonial because it was an example of the so-called British attempt to spread English in order to give British imperialists a privileged position in world trade. The theory was also criticized as wrong and unscientific as it did not agree with the correct Marxist linguistic theories of Stalin.

This was followed by a period of intensive study of Soviet principles of education, theories and methods of language

instruction, and textbooks used in teaching English as a foreign language. There was also a drastic, nationwide reduction of the number of English classes and their replacement by Russian classes in secondary schools, colleges and universities, the degree of reduction depending on the availability of teachers. Teachers of English were required to study Russian, and as soon as they were deemed qualified to teach, they were assigned to do so. Russian teachers were in the limelight and were looked upon with envy and respect; the English teachers looked on silently and apprehensively waited for the call to change their profession or the notice which meant the loss of their jobs.

There is one aspect of this 'Learn from the Soviet Union Movement' that is often overlooked. Communist cadres in the newly established and recently merged universities faced teachers from many different schools and universities, hence they had the problem of achieving consensus for the smooth running of their English departments, and asserting their leadership and authority. However, they had neither the education, training, experience or background nor a knowledge of the conditions to enable them to deal with the complex problems successfully. The 'Learn from the Soviet Union Movement' which put all problems on a political basis, not only provided the cadres with a means to overcome and clear away resistance but also gave them the possibility of learning in short intensive training courses how the Russians dealt with problems. With this 'blueprint' in hand, they could assert their leadership and authority.

Most teachers, as well as engineers, technicians, doctors and other professionals educated and trained in the West were at a disadvantage because they knew little or nothing about Soviet methods or theories and had to study them before they could offer any opinion. In addition, everything was put as a political question, a question of whether one was for or against learning from the Soviet Union. More significantly, it was also put as a question of supporting or not supporting the Chinese Communist Party and the reconstruction of the country. In this way, no one really could raise objections. Most people kept their views to themselves either out of traditional respect for their leaders or because they wanted to learn more about Soviet methods before they expressed any opinion.

The Communist Party cadres in the English departments could 'persuade' teachers coming from different backgrounds and schools to adopt a uniform practice, a standard methodology and

a standard Soviet textbook for teaching English, and teach texts whose political content was 'good and safe'. And they could persuade the English language teachers with different backgrounds to follow a syllabus which would meet with the approval of the Party leadership and silence possible criticism from liberals and scholars with a Western education and background. Those who actually did criticize or even questioned the wisdom of some of the methods which were adopted later saw that their attitude or dissidence was the cause of their undoing during the 'Anti-Rightist Movement'.

In this second period, we see again in China, how the political, historical and economic factors and the cultural factor of obeying one's leaders influenced the development of the teaching of English.

1956-1966, INDEPENDENT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The third period was a 10-year period of 'Independent National Development'. In the second period, China had gained greater economic strength as it had increased both agricultural and industrial production. It had also improved its international position and gained greater respect especially among Third World countries after an armistice was reached in Korea along the 38th parallel in 1953 and the success of the Bandung Conference in 1955. However, the 20th Soviet Congress held in February 1956, led to a split between the Soviet Union and China, and this split widened in 1960 when Soviet 'experts', technicians and blueprints were suddenly withdrawn and when aid stopped. Sino-Soviet solidarity and friendship changed to conflict and rivalry, especially when the Chinese Communist Party began attempts to capture the leadership of the Communist world revolution with cultural missions, and a militant ideological offensive. It was clear that Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party did not intend to play second fiddle to the younger and more junior Khrushchev whose 'revisionism' was attacked as a surrender to capitalism.

Internally, everyone was urged to study Chairman Mao's works and how he applied the universal principles of Marxism and Leninism to solve the concrete problems of building socialism under Chinese conditions. The ideas of independence, self-reliance, developing one's own methods, and dependence on one's own resources were stressed. The slogan "Learn from the Soviet

Union" was dropped and replaced by "Learn from all the advanced experiences of the world".

Leadership in the Communist world and the success of socialist construction required the mobilization of the people, including two important sectors, intellectuals and cadres. It meant greater participation by intellectuals and a more successful 'remoulding of their thoughts'. To ensure the whole-hearted cooperation of the intellectuals and greater contribution by them, there was an attempt to improve their working conditions, to give them more access to foreign publications, and to give them greater benefits. To achieve greater participation in national affairs by the intellectuals, they were urged to make suggestions for improvements, and to voice their criticism of the cadres and of bureaucracy in general under the slogan "Let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend."

The rapid rise in Party membership and the rapid growth of Party apparatus consisting mostly of unseasoned and inexperienced young members, many of primary school education, resulted in inefficiency and ineptitude in administration, and what was criticized as "blind optimism, dogmatism, commandism, blind opportunism, empiricism and bureaucraticism". There was evidence of false reporting to trusting 'bureaucratic' superiors, and evidence of people being misled by the cadres' false promises and corruption.

The Anti-Rightist Movement

To mobilize these two groups and especially to rectify and improve the Party's working style, a 'rectification movement' was announced in April 1957. Intellectuals were invited to take part, and given the honour of being 'trusted' as an intimate member of the 'family' and invited by cadres to give their suggestions for the improvement of the Party's working style, and to voice their criticisms. Believing that Mao's Hundred Flowers slogan was a call for real free speech, intellectuals expressed widespread dissatisfaction with the Chinese Communist Party's dictatorial ways and totalitarian system as well as its ideas, aims, policies and methods. In addition, there was widespread voicing of many 'liberal and democratic ideas'. Chairman Mao and the Party leaders were surprised. In June 1957 when it seemed to the party leaders that the intellectuals were getting out of hand and not supporting the senior leaders as they had expected, but were

showing 'undue' independence, or even trying to establish an independent political force, the Anti-Rightist Movement was launched.

The vociferous Rightists were first attacked, but later even those who had said very little were branded, especially when cadres could not deliver the required quota of Rightists. And after the Rightists were forced to recant publicly, and punished by being demoted, and after thousands of cadres and others were purged, great numbers of people — intellectuals, teachers, city cadres, functionaries and students — were sent to the countryside, so that they could be reformed through manual labour and close contact with the peasant masses. Unfortunately, many well-trained teachers in ELT were branded Rightists and so could neither teach nor play a constructive role in the work of foreign language departments.

This was then followed in 1958 by the announcement of the 'General Line', the movement to establish communes in the countryside, and the 'Great Leap Forward', and cadres took the opportunity to point out that successes in these movements would 'soon show what could be achieved in socialist construction after the negative influences of the Rightists were removed'.

The Great Leap Forward

The Great Leap Forward was an attempt to use the methods of political movements and mobilizing the masses in economic construction. The purpose was to raise agricultural and industrial production and build a modern 'socialist' state quickly by shortening the period of transition to 'Communism'. Probably the most publicized feature of the Great Leap Forward was the attempt to surpass the British steel production figures by producing steel from hundreds of thousands of small 'backyard' smelting furnaces by millions of people in a round-the-clock 'battle for steel'. Lasting several months and producing a lot of unusable steel, it used up a lot of 'old steel' from good iron gates, pots and pans and iron fixtures. A lot of useful things were destroyed, while a lot of unusable steel was produced, but politically speaking, the 'good news' of victories in the 'battle for steel' showed how much the people supported the 'correct leadership' of Chairman Mao. In addition, the cadres who were actively involved were promoted. Ideologically, there was a new effort to get everyone to study Chairman Mao's works, and the

works of Marx and Lenin. There was a surge of nationalistic and patriotic feeling.

In the field of foreign language teaching, Russian classes became less popular as fewer and fewer Russian books and journals came through to China. More and more English language classes began to replace the Russian classes and soon French, German and Spanish departments were set up in key universities, like Fudan University in Shanghai.

In ELT, China tried to develop teaching materials and methods suited to Chinese students and Chinese conditions. This reflected the spirit of the Party's General Line and the Great Leap Forward. Teachers were urged to think independently, find better solutions to problems, and work out a way to teach more and better English in less time and at less cost. Soviet textbooks were by now all replaced by new textbooks compiled by Chinese teachers.

Efforts to improve the quality of ELT were often very amateurish because senior teachers, usually Western-trained intellectuals, were not generally trusted enough to be chosen to lead or direct these efforts. Instead young Party 'activists' and cadres who were familiar with guerrilla warfare and organizing mass movements were chosen. Experienced language teachers were regarded as bound by tradition and not sufficiently 'liberated' enough to break with the 'old' and establish the 'new', so they were consulted after plans and decisions were made, if at all. Faced with a *fait accompli* these older intellectuals usually did not feel it wise to take a negative attitude towards what was done.

One method used to achieve success in ELT which expressed the spirit of this period was called 'the method of using big organized army units in battle to win one's objectives' also called 'military action by big army units' (*da bing tuan zuo zhan*). Junior teachers, mostly Party and Youth League members and students, were organized into 'platoons, companies, divisions, and armies' under the leadership of cadres and political instructors to do various jobs, described as 'capturing various enemy strongholds' such as compiling new textbooks, proposing new methods of teaching and new approaches. Simpler tasks, such as installing language laboratories and listening rooms with individual desks equipped with recorders and earphones and a library of classified tapes for listening comprehension exercises, were done quickly. However, there was no time to make studies of past achievements and problems before dealing with the more complex job of

compiling new textbooks and developing new methods of teaching. Quick or immediate results were aimed at, so that 'victories' could be reported. Older, experienced Western-trained teachers, who had survived the Anti-Rightist Movement, were not consulted. Advice to take greater care and to take measures to maintain standards and quality were brushed aside in order that all work could keep up with a pre-set time schedule. Speed, not quality, was stressed.

Positive Results

As expected, a lot of the work done in this period was scrapped later as neither teachers nor students wanted to nor could use the material. Yet, not all was lost or wasted. There were some positive results. Never before had so many teachers and students been involved in the work of finding solutions to problems of applied linguistics. The experiences, mistakes, failures, and some successes, taught those involved that the problems were complex and that the experienced senior Western-trained intellectuals had a positive contribution to make. The younger Party cadres and activists realized that they were all facing similar problems, and when the older intellectuals later mentioned these problems and difficulties, cadres gradually believed that they were really trying to help and not just being obstructive.

The 'liberation' of the mind before 'leaping forward' and the slogan "Let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend!" allowed teachers to consult all relevant material and young Party cadres, Youth League members and 'activists' consulted available books by Western scholars and teachers. For example, the ideas of H. E. Palmer, once criticized as 'reactionary' and 'imperialist', were studied, discussed, and tried out in the classroom. Substitution tables were adopted for oral drills. Hornby's *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*⁷ was used but not publicly acknowledged. Books by Jespersen, Curme, Palmer (e.g., *A Grammar of English Words*), Fries and Lado were again consulted. Structuralist ideas and methods as well as audiolingual methods were tried out.

There was an increased use of audiovisual aids using material produced during the Great Leap Forward and some good reading material was discovered and later used by special textbook-compiling committees. Benefits of greater language exposure to

both written and oral English was recognized, as more home reading was assigned and more oral exercises and dictation were done in class. There was also a greater use of oral introduction and explanation of new texts in English than before.

1966-1976, THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Great Leap Forward, which did not really leap forward as expected, led to differences within the Party. Defence Minister Peng De-huai frankly presented many damaging facts, criticized the Great Leap Forward and was ousted from power and became himself the object of attack for his 'bourgeois thinking' and casting doubt on Mao's wisdom. Party members especially experienced leaders like Liu Shao-qi and the Secretary General, Deng Xiao-ping, who knew something of the way business and industry were managed in capitalist societies, opposed Mao's panacea of mobilizing the masses to solve China's complex economic problems. They proposed the method of training and using elite work teams, and relying on 'experts' under Party control. Internally, instead of leaping forward economically as Mao had hoped, China soon faced three years of economic difficulties, lowered agricultural and industrial production and natural disasters. The Socialist Education Movement which Mao had hoped in 1963-1964 would counter 'revisionism' and bring back revolutionary fervour and faith in 'permanent revolution' seemed to lose momentum in 1965. Externally, China was also faced with a setback in its foreign relations, when, in 1965, the US began continuous bombing of North Vietnam with China unable to help its ally. Nor was China able to exclude the Soviet Union from the Afro-Asian conference in 1965. While in Indonesia, the pro-Beijing Indonesian Communist Party was wiped out after an attempted coup failed.

To gain new momentum for the revolution and build an impregnable power base consisting of enthusiastic revolutionary youths and cadres indoctrinated with Mao Ze-dong Thought, and to consolidate the foundations of the Chinese socialist state with proletarian culture cleansed of bourgeois and feudal poison and other impurities, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, which lasted roughly from May 1966 to the fall of the 'Gang of Four' in September 1976, and the reinstatement of Deng Xiao-ping and the beginning of a series of new liberal and practical policies.

During the Cultural Revolution, normal academic life was disrupted. Classes were suspended for around three years to allow the students to take part in the all-important political struggle. Many students joined the Red Guards, took part in mass meetings, rallies, parades, put up big character posters expressing their views supporting Mao and the Revolution and exposing, criticizing or attacking various enemies of the state, reactionaries, counter-revolutionaries, spies, capitalist roaders and revisionists and Rightists, and those who do their bidding. 'Capitalist roaders' referred to Party officials and cadres who were considered to have forgotten the basic principles of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Ze-dong Thought and who had taken the *road* to capitalism and adopted capitalistic methods and principles. If Gorbachev were judged by Red Guards, he would be branded as a capitalist roader.

The 'Four Olds' — ideology, thought, habits and customs — were attacked. Homes and offices were invaded and searched for foreign books, clothing which reflected bourgeois fashions and taste, and also other 'objectionable' articles and pictures. Many books, pictures, even works of art and valuable curios and antiques were confiscated, burned, smashed, broken or destroyed. An urban reign of terror followed. Victims were beaten, humiliated and sometimes killed. Many were 'arrested', interrogated and put into confinement. Many others committed suicide. No one was safe. One faction, gaining the upper hand in one power struggle might be 'safe' for a while, but soon, on losing popular support or becoming involved with leaders or groups under attack, would itself become the object of attack. Senior Party leaders, like Liu Shao-qi and Deng Xiao-ping and even veterans of the Long March, marshals and generals like Luo Rui-qing, Peng Zhen, Marshal Chen Yi, Marshal Peng De-huai, and Lin Biao, fell one after the other. Turmoil, power struggles both in the Central Government and in all levels of government, and even pitched battles between armed groups, tore the country apart, until the army had to be called in to restore order, and by the spring of 1969, the situation returned gradually to order.

College Education, 1969–1976

Classes resumed after a fashion in 1969, but students did not enter college by examination but by recommendation for political reasons, connections and standing. By this time, colleges were being run by 'revolutionary committees' consisting of

'revolutionary factory workers', 'revolutionary army officers' and 'revolutionary teachers', that is teachers whose parents were not landlords, capitalists, Rightists, or capitalist roaders, and who had shown themselves to be loyal to Chairman Mao.

Students who were able to go to college, were admitted for the following purposes:

- to take part in the work of running the college they attended, particularly to take part in the work of transforming the college to conform to the new ideals of the Cultural Revolution and of the revolutionary committees;
- to take part in the work of remoulding, reforming and re-educating the teachers;
- to take part in the work of examining textbooks, reference books, teaching materials, lecture notes, syllabuses, teaching methods, and helping to supervise the carrying out of Mao's educational policy, and to take part in the work of establishing a new revolutionary order in the college or university they were attending;
- to acquire knowledge and training that was considered useful for building the new socialist order.

Needless to say not much constructive work was done under these circumstances. Although classes resumed in the autumn of 1969, teachers entered the classrooms with trepidation as they faced the revolutionary students — political activists in good standing with the revolutionary committees in charge of the colleges. These students, who came to college with the purpose of reforming the teachers and transforming the colleges, often called their teachers at the end of a class period to attend a meeting with class members to listen to their evaluation of his lecture and his handling of class, as well as criticism of his faults and shortcomings, especially if they did not agree with his view point. These criticisms usually resulted in asking the teacher to analyze his 'wrong' point of view and to search for the cause, which meant that he had to find the cause in his bourgeois and feudal ideas, and to criticize the kind of bourgeois education he had received at home and in school.

English Language Teaching, 1969–1976

Teachers often had great difficulty in knowing just what to do in handling an English language class, especially an oral exercise. For example, asking students to answer questions on the text became a guessing game for the teacher. He had to guess if the particular student could answer the question. If the question was too easy, the teacher would be criticized for looking down on the revolutionary student and accused of not really helping him to improve. If the question was too difficult, the teacher would be accused of taking revenge on the student and creating difficulties in order to make him appear foolish in front of his peers (a serious matter if the student was a leader). The teacher might be accused of not sympathizing with the student with heavy revolutionary responsibilities, and not helping him to overcome his difficulties. These accusations could be very serious if there was any animosity on the part of the student and if it became a matter of supporting or opposing the Cultural Revolution.

Few teachers could perform well under these circumstances. However, if the more influential students really wanted to get knowledge and training, and if the teacher was respected for his proficiency, his knowledge could become a lever to get better treatment if he was apparently modest and if the students felt he really was trying hard to teach them something useful, and he was sincere in wanting to serve the Revolution.

To test the teacher's sincerity and for their own convenience, the students often asked their teachers to go to their dormitories to give them coaching lessons at any time of the day or night. Teachers were often used as live dictionaries and asked to give definitions of new words, and their Chinese equivalents and examples of use. Teachers also had to re-explain the difficult parts of a text, whenever there was a need. If a student was absent from class, he would ask his teacher to give him a make-up lesson. Teachers often went to the student dormitories before breakfast and stayed there until late at night, leaving only to go to the classroom to teach, or to the dining hall for meals. Students could rest, but teachers could not. When all questions were answered, the teachers would have to sweep the floors of the classrooms, wipe the desks and windows and do physical labour to show they were earnest in reforming themselves through labour.

This situation lasted about a year until the teachers' health started to break down under the strain. Teachers had no time to

rest, or to prepare their lessons, and they hardly had time to eat. Sleep was minimal, about 5-6 hours a night, and of course they had little time to wash their clothes or do any chores. They had virtually no private life, and practically no time was spent with their families. Their younger children were sent to nurseries and kindergartens and older children went to school, staying there the whole day. The prevailing thought was that the family nurtured individualism and selfishness and so 'collective' life was stressed to develop 'socialist' if not 'communist' thinking.

The situation 'improved' after 1972, when the revolutionary leaders wanted the colleges to train qualified 'cadres' to man their bureaucracy and ostensibly to take part in building up a new proletarian culture, but often there were considerations for building up a power base for their own clique. For example, when the Gang of Four, whose power base was in Shanghai, wanted to fill the Central Government with qualified cadres from Shanghai, they chose Fudan University to train the people they wanted. With this end in view, Fudan University teachers were given better treatment and students were told to respect a time schedule which would allow the teachers to prepare their lessons and to have enough time for their meals and 8 hours sleep, plus some time to attend to their personal and family needs. The Foreign Language Department was even given funds to buy recorders and radios so that English language majors could listen to the BBC and the Voice of America broadcasts to improve their listening comprehension. No teacher dared to take advantage of this 'privilege' since it had been considered a crime for ordinary citizens to listen to what was regarded as an 'enemy station', and no one wanted to be suspected of spreading 'rumours'.

Open Door Schooling

There was also another development worth mentioning in this period, namely 'Open Door Schooling'. Of course this had nothing to do with the 'Open Door' policy. Open Door Schooling was proposed by China's leaders to bring the country's educational system closer to the needs of society and particularly closer to agricultural and industrial production, and to give a practical content to education — especially education in the universities. The revolutionary leaders hoped that it would promote better understanding between the working class, the peasants and the intellectuals, as well as help to make China's

labouring masses more 'intellectual' and help the intellectuals remould themselves closer to the labouring masses. This was to be a means of educating the people and preparing them for the transition to Communism, and bridging the gap between the intellectual and the non-intellectual manual worker.

In practice, classes were held on a farm, in a factory, on the docks, or in a department store for two or more weeks at certain parts of the year according to a schedule, in addition to being held in the university classroom. Besides studying the material, often especially prepared by the teachers so that there was some relevance to the places where the classes and lectures were held, students did various surveys and projects and talked with the workers or peasants and members of the administrative and Party staff in charge. Usually, both teachers and students lived at the site during this period, so they could have a chance to be closer to the factory workers and peasants and to make friends with them. There would be visits, discussions, meetings and sometimes even parties, where students, teachers and workers or peasants performed songs and dances. Political instructors who went along were very much like the political instructors and Red Army officers who led the soldiers during the Long March and made friends with the people along the way. Students spread Chairman Mao's Thoughts and the Party line while socializing with the workers and peasants. In addition, they also did whatever work they could get, without monetary or other reward, in order to work alongside the workers and peasants. As for the teachers, besides teaching, they were also required to remould their thoughts and to get a better understanding of what was going on so that they could relate their lectures and exercises and projects to the life, work and problems of their new environment.

Open Door Schooling for the foreign language departments gave teachers and students a chance to practise and use the foreign language in many real life situations and role-playing oral exercises became more realistic and had practical significance. For example, students who went to the Friendship Stores which served foreign guests, were able to use English in real life situations in serving as shop assistants. They said they learned more easily when they could see how they should use the language in a real situation. The new vocabulary was also related to these situations and it was possible to devote more time to drills in basic sentence patterns, with the new environment suggesting the content words, the situations and the form of the exercises. Students, many of

whom had not studied or read a textbook since the Cultural Revolution began, were interested by the novelty of such classes, and were eager to learn what was clearly very practical, and teachers were glad that they were able to do something useful in a creative way, especially when some of these students were not well prepared for a college education. Yet, in a quieter moment, an older teacher might wish this emphasis on practical use could be balanced by some courses which could give greater depth and breadth of vision, and a well rounded liberal education with some courses in the humanities. However, this thought had to be quickly suppressed as this line of thinking could lead to suspicion that he had not eradicated his bourgeois and feudal thoughts, and therefore needed more proletarian education.

1976-1989, REFORM, THE 'OPEN DOOR' AND MODERNIZATION

By the beginning of 1976, the whole nation was expecting a change of leadership as both Premier Zhou En-lai and Chairman Mao were old and seriously ill. What was not expected was the great nationwide outpouring of popular bereavement, which occurred when Premier Zhou died on January 8, 1976. This bereavement, expressed in piles of wreathes and especially the eulogies in Tian An Men Square in Beijing, reflected widespread dissatisfaction with the political leadership of the four chief protagonists of the Cultural Revolution, the Gang of Four, indirectly criticizing Chairman Mao. The demonstration was ruthlessly suppressed by troops in a bloody military action. Deng, Acting Premier since Zhou En-lai's death, was dismissed from all his posts by the Politburo, and Hua Guo-feng was made Acting Premier. Chairman Mao died on September 9, and Hua was soon made Party Chairman. Almost immediately afterwards, the Gang of Four was arrested and denounced and soon Deng Xiao-ping was back in power, proposing new practical and liberal policies, with the aim of uniting a nation divided by factionalism and ideological sectarianism, and reviving an economy paralyzed by the Gang of Four's policies which put political class struggle and ideological purity ahead of production. The nation, which was on the edge of bankruptcy and disaster, needed developing into a strong, prosperous, modern socialist state. Deng's power was consolidated and his policies of putting economic growth first,

opening China to the international community, and internal peace and stability with no political movements were confirmed by the Eleventh Party Congress in August 1977 and again confirmed by the Fifth National People's Congress in March 1978. Deng had sensed the popular feelings, the general revulsion against endless Party strife, class struggle and the widespread demands for a better life, and he proposed policies in which the 'glory' that was attached to being 'poor' was replaced by the new ideal of a strong, prosperous, modern socialist economy with improved living standards for all the people.

There was no denying the achievement of the Communist Party in uniting and building up the country after 1949, in regenerating the people and achieving great political, social and economic changes. All this has been substantiated by independent observers and statistics show great increases in agricultural and industrial production, the doubling of China's population, the growing enrolment figures in the nation's schools, the rise of the average life expectancy of the people and the general nationwide improvement in public health and medical services. However, it was also evident that if China was to revive its economy shattered by the Cultural Revolution and to meet the growing demands for a better life, changes in the economic structure and policies giving greater incentives for greater production were urgently needed. The solution was a kind of market economy. However, besides policies which would enable market forces to play a role in stimulating production, there was a growing conviction among the policy makers that international trade, the introduction of modern technology and large-scale investment by the advanced industrial nations of the world were vital to quick economic growth and development. These are the basic elements that could transform the wish for modernization into reality.

Where could China get modern technology and capital? China's split with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries which developed into small scale fighting along the Sino-Soviet border during the Cultural Revolution made it clear that no help could be obtained from the Soviet bloc. The extraordinary economic progress made by Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea also showed the achievements capitalism could make in a market economy with Western investments and modern technology. The Chinese Communist Party under Deng's leadership decided on a series of policies which opened China's doors to the West, encouraged business

and international trade, as well as investments and the introduction of technology. And so, China emerged from isolation. In a country bound by centuries of conservatism and communist dogma, the magic that brought about this dramatic change was Deng's pragmatism, a way of thinking best exemplified by his famous saying, "It's not important whether a cat is white or black. A good cat is one that catches the rat."

Education

New policies in education were adopted to bring this sector into line with the other changes. School and colleges went back to normal. College entrance examinations were again held on a nationwide scale. The respected position of the teacher was reaffirmed. Intellectuals were given a new status. For the first time, equality of intellectuals with factory workers was stressed and now intellectuals were called 'intellectual workers'. Teachers, artists and writers went back to their original or similar posts, and those who had been jailed or wrongly accused of various crimes against the Party or the socialist state were reinstated.

After affirming the status of China's intellectuals and the respected position of the teacher in particular, the Party began a publicity campaign to further raise the position of the teacher. September 10th was named Teacher's Day when teachers were to be especially honoured. Teacher representatives were received by leaders of the Party and government. Teachers received privileged treatment in stores, vegetable markets, banks, and theatres. Insurance companies offered special reduced rates. Movies praised their virtues, reported on the achievements of model teachers, and stressed the importance of teachers in China's modernization programme. Salaries were raised with the promise of further increases. Housing authorities talked of plans to give better housing at cheap rates, and actually assigned some good apartments to a few model teachers. In addition, more money was given to educational institutions, especially to key universities, for equipment, books, new buildings and apartments for teachers.

Even more significant was the growing respect and trust given to teachers with Western backgrounds and training. Teachers had been regarded with suspicion because of their former connection with foreign teachers and because of their imperialist and bourgeois thoughts. Most of these teachers were now regarded as having really successfully rid their minds of these faults and could

be regarded without discrimination. Many of them were given important roles, even leading roles to play in educational affairs, with Party officials giving them their full support. Some Party secretaries even stated their support publicly and said that these teachers should be given a free hand in doing their work, that teachers should not be afraid of making mistakes in experimenting with new material and new methods, that it is human to err and that such teachers should be trusted and given support by the Party to carry out programmes to improve the quality of teaching. Many such teachers who had not been considered for promotion for over twenty years were now promoted and as progress and achievements in work were made, they were commended and given public recognition. Some were made 'model workers' and given other honours, and a few were promoted to leading administrative posts.

English Language Teaching

Due to economic and political necessity English, as an international language, was given a new status and was regarded as an essential tool for international trade, scientific and technological exchange, modernization and progress. Most people wanted to study English. The next most popular language was Japanese, followed by German and French. Practically no one wanted to study Russian and these classes in schools and colleges were now replaced by English classes. An estimated 50 million students studied English in schools and colleges while there were at least 150 million people studying English in part-time schools, night schools, colleges of continuing education, adult schools, private schools, private classes and classes organized nationwide by factories, government bureaus, overseas Chinese organizations and labour unions, in addition millions were registered to study English by radio or by television. One of the most popular English language courses was *Follow Me* which was televised all over the country and offered by the Central Radio and Television University, Beijing, with British expertise giving help and support.

A sustained effort was made to improve ELT in China in a systematic and scientific way. This effort involved many of the best qualified and most experienced teachers, both foreign and Chinese, including scholars and teachers who had returned from studies in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and other countries. Real progress was made. A new and improved syllabus for ELT in

China's universities, colleges and foreign language institutes was promulgated, new teaching materials were prepared and new methods were tried out on a small scale. Many aspects of these developments are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Many factors contributed to progress during this period, other than the obvious favourable political and economic climate and the support of the Communist Party and government:

- The works of linguists, teachers and scholars such as Chomsky, D. A. Wilkins, H. G. Widdowson, C. Candlin, Fries and others were now openly read and discussed and more and more teachers began to regard linguistics and applied linguistics with respect, and as disciplines in their own right. Knowledge of these subjects started to spread and in experimental classes in key universities many new ideas and methods were tried out, not only structural and audiolingual ideas and methods, but situational and communicative methods as well, with most teachers approaching these innovations in a way that can best be described as pragmatic and eclectic.
- In this period, the entrance level of English of new college students rose, necessitating new and better textbooks. This situation provided a chance for compiling textbooks that could be used in new ways and enabled teachers to experiment with new methods.
- There was stronger motivation on the part of students to study English better and a greater willingness to try new methods. As the need for English increased, people in all walks of life wanted to learn. More significant was the growing demand for cadres with a higher level of proficiency in English. As a result, students now wanted to be trained to master all five skills — reading, writing, speaking, listening comprehension and translating, not just one reading skill. This gave the teachers a stronger impetus to improve their teaching.
- The latest foreign books on ELT and textbooks or course books for English language classes were readily available and were used, and most teachers could buy pirated editions at low prices. Alexander's *New Concept Series* became widely

used as a course book and was reprinted with a list of new words and their Chinese equivalents (see also Chapter 3.1). Some editions even had Chinese translations of the text!

- Discussions, meetings, seminars and conferences on ELT where papers were read and discussed were organized by universities and professional bodies like the Association for Foreign Language and Literature.
- Journals were published giving English teachers opportunities to publish their papers and to hold discussions of common interest.
- Inter-collegiate exchange was encouraged. Delegations of English language teachers would go from university to university to discuss academic questions of mutual interest.
- The Ministry of Education (later the China State Commission on Education) organized special committees of more experienced teachers, to discuss and decide on syllabuses for ELT in universities and colleges (see also Chapter 5.5), to discuss important questions related to the compiling of new textbooks, to discuss, examine and approve new English language textbooks for national use. A lot of work was done to encourage and guide efforts to improve the quality of teaching.
- Citywide meetings of English language teachers were sponsored and organized by municipal education bureaus to exchange information on good textbooks and good teaching methods and to encourage and commend teachers.

Under the Open Door Policy, the Chinese government encouraged and helped students, scientists, engineers, doctors and other professional men and Party and government cadres to go to foreign countries and learn Western technology, ways of doing business and principles and methods of management, as well as promoting cultural, educational and scientific exchange. The result was a quick growth of exchange and cooperative work with countries of the West and Japan. Agreements were signed with Western governments for cooperation and exchange in cultural and educational work as well as in science and technology and

other activities. Not only did many Chinese professionals go abroad under these agreements, but many 'foreign experts', a term loosely applied to all foreign personnel from full professors and famous scholars and scientists to ordinary teachers, came to China.

The British Council began running a regular series of high level courses in English language, and since 1979, the Council has sent several English language delegations to China to study the conditions and to consider possible development of cooperative activities. It has also arranged for Chinese delegations of Ministry of Education cadres and university academics to visit a wide range of ELT institutions in Britain. Teams of English teacher-trainers were sent to eight major cities in China, and an English Teaching Resource Centre was set up in the British Embassy in Beijing to lend books, film and tapes to British, foreign and Chinese English teachers.

In addition an *ELT Newsletter* was published and distributed throughout China. British expertise also played an important role in the preparation of materials, in programme design and in giving guidance in distance education for the thousands of field tutors in the language courses offered by the Central Radio and Television University, Beijing. Catherine Flower, a British Council appointee, appeared in the popular and very successful *Follow Me* series and is familiar to millions of Chinese, young and old, who enthusiastically follow the lessons.

Language courses and teacher-training courses were offered by American Fulbright scholars; language courses and courses in linguistics and literature were offered by teachers from the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and the Language Centre at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, was founded in collaboration with the University of California at Los Angeles featuring the training of Chinese teachers at UCLA; and the use of American teaching materials.

Cooperative effort between Chinese and foreign teachers was encouraged all over the country, and directly or indirectly it resulted in the production of many new and improved textbooks, such as *A New English Course* by The Shanghai International Studies University (Chapter 5.2) and the new set of EFL textbooks, *CECL*, by Guangzhou Foreign Languages Institute, in research and work in other materials writing, syllabus design and testing, in the development of methodology under Chinese conditions, and in distance education (Chapter 5.9).

An example of successful cooperation in syllabus design involving cooperation by many key universities on a nationwide scale was the production of a *New Syllabus for College English for Arts and Science Majors*, in a four-year university degree programme (Chapter 5.5). For the first time in China, both linguistic competence and communicative competence were incorporated, and teaching objectives and achievement were measured and defined quantitatively. For example, vocabulary extent, reading speed and speech rate of listening materials were expressed quantitatively. This syllabus was approved and promulgated by the Ministry of Education in 1985.

The Open Door Policy also led to much greater student exposure to English thus contributing substantially to the raising of English standards in the country. British and American films, documentaries and video shows which were previously forbidden were now publicly shown more and more often in more and more cinemas. Foreign newspapers and magazines were made available to students. TV programmes in English, programmes like *Follow Me*, news broadcasts in English over local radio and TV stations were started. English language newspapers and magazines, especially those which had special sections in simpler English for beginners and intermediates were published. Student language laboratories began showing video tapes of documentaries in English and features from abroad. Students could now listen to the BBC and the Voice of America programmes openly without fear of being questioned by Party or police officials. In addition there were opportunities to talk to English-speaking tourists and travellers, especially in the bigger cities along China's coast; to speak English in 'English corners' in parks; to speak English with foreign students especially in many key universities; to take part in extracurricular activities held in English, such as recitation contests, drama clubs, English clubs; and to attend lectures by numerous visiting scholars, teachers and other foreigners.

The Open Door Policy led to the nationwide establishment of many Advanced Teacher Training Courses (ATTC) by teams of foreign and Chinese teachers. These courses gave thousands of trainees a good basis to improve their standard of teaching. A good beginning was made in improving methodology on a wide scale, especially in bringing about a general awareness of the need for trained teachers who have studied and gone through a programme of studies, including applied linguistics, as provided in ATTCs (Chapter 6).

As a result of all this activity, perhaps the most significant and most encouraging achievement is the appearance of a new generation of good young teachers who are experimenting with new ideas in teaching English. The efforts of all these teachers have led to a general improvement in the quality of ELT, in some cases substantiated by tests, surveys and analysis of results (see Chapter 5.4). Many of these teachers have gone through teacher training courses, or graduated from MA programmes in the UK, USA and other countries in the West and have returned, bringing new ideas, new techniques and new theories to their jobs.

Considering the size of China, the number of these teachers may still be relatively small, but they are doing a lot of constructive work as teachers in English language courses in schools, colleges and universities, especially in teachers' colleges, or very significantly, as teacher trainers themselves. If they could influence other teachers and lead groups of teachers to experiment with and develop better materials, methods and techniques, and if teacher-training courses and Master of Applied Linguistics Degree programmes could attract and produce still greater numbers of dedicated teachers, so that in key universities at least, a core of able and devoted teachers could be formed, the teaching of English in China could be raised to a new level over the next few years. If this could happen, a really solid foundation for the teaching of English at a high professional level would be laid and this in time would surely lead to an unprecedented rise in the quality of teaching and a general rise in the general level of language proficiency all over the country.

If this were really to happen in a country of more than one billion, the impact on the world could be staggering. However, this is a big 'if'. Considering the powerful influence that the political and economic climate has had on ELT in China in the past, we must be more cautious in making forecasts. The history of ELT in China outlined in this chapter shows clearly the profound influence that political, economic, social and cultural factors have had on its development. We have seen how the negative influences have retarded development, as well as how positive influences have promoted development. The long list of achievements showing the progress made in the period of Reform, Open Door and Modernization shows what could be done with a favourable climate, but the careful reader should note that most of the achievements were made during a very brief period of time, mainly from 1981 to 1987. 1976 to 1981 was a preparatory stage

and reform really got underway when Deng became the undisputed leader in 1981. After 1987 all kinds of difficulties began cropping up and grew because many basic economic and political problems could not be solved satisfactorily. Looked at with a historical perspective, the achievements of this period should be regarded as a good beginning or a first successful step taken in the direction of progress. They should not blind us to the fact that they were made by overcoming great difficulties and obstacles and at the cost of much personal sacrifice and tremendous effort by teachers, students and administrators involved who were supported by the hope of a real improvement in the economic and political system as well as in the standard of living (see Chapter 4). Nor should we forget to examine the significance of many problems that appeared while work was being done in this period.

Ominous signals appeared in 1984 with the short-lived movement against 'spiritual pollution' from bourgeois and Western sources, showing the deeply felt opposition to some of the changes in the hearts of left-wing leaders and cadres. The political atmosphere became tense again when, in the wake of the student demonstrations in the winter of 1986-1987, a campaign against 'bourgeois liberalism' (meaning liberals in the university, the media, and elsewhere) was launched, and journalist Liu Binyan and astrophysicist Fang Lizhi and others were expelled from the Communist Party and Hu Yaobang was removed from his post as Party Secretary.

We shall see the progress made in ELT in this period in a better perspective after we understand in greater detail how English was and is taught and learned (see Chapter 3) and after we have a clearer idea of the factors affecting teachers, students and administrators described in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Notes

1. Maximilian D. Berlitz (1852-1921) was one of the 19th century pioneers who tried to reform methods of language teaching. The first Berlitz school opened in Providence, Rhode Island, USA in 1878. Berlitz was born in Germany but lived mainly in the USA. By 1900 there were about 70 schools in operation in the USA, France, England and Germany.
2. Harold E. Palmer (1877-1949) started as a Berlitz teacher in Belgium. He wrote three major books on language teaching: *The Scientific Study and*

Teaching of Languages (1917), *The Oral Method* (1921), and *The Principles of Language Study* (1922).

3. *Manual of English Grammar and Composition* by J. C. Nessfield, MA, author of *English Grammar Past and Present, Historical English and Deviation*, published by Macmillan and Co. Ltd London, First Edition 1898, Revised in 1924 and 1939.
4. Otto Jespersen (1860-1943) published his work, *How to Teach a Foreign Language in Danish* in 1904. The English translation of this work has been one of the most widely read books on language teaching in China as elsewhere in the world. Jespersen's *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles I-VII* and his *Essentials of English Grammar* have also been studied by English language teachers in China.
5. Michael West (1888-1973) wrote *Learning to Read a Foreign Language and Bilingualism* in 1926.
6. Edward I. Thorndike made word count studies and published his work, *The Teacher's Word Book* in 1921. This was the basis of the Thorndike Dictionary to which teachers could refer to get information on frequency count of 20,000 most frequently used words.
7. A. S. Hornby's *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* was published by Oxford University Press in 1954 and was almost immediately brought privately into China from Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 3.1

How English is Taught in Tertiary Educational Institutions

Y. F. Dzau

INTRODUCTION

How is English taught in tertiary educational institutions in China now? This question is not easy to answer. China may appear to be monolithic under the unified leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, but there is actually much diversity and variety as well as some basic similarities in English language teaching. When we talk of ELT in China's schools and colleges, we are really talking about the teaching that is going on in hundreds of thousands of classes involving millions of students. The quality of teaching also varies from institutions in the former coastal and river treaty ports with more foreign influence to institutions in the hinterland where not only is such influence much less, but where the level of economic development is much lower. We are also dealing with a subject that has undergone changes over a period of forty years. In spite of the difficulty of the task, the following description of ELT in China is given so that we may have a more detailed picture to enable us to evaluate the teaching and to have a basis to judge future progress. Chapter 3.1 deals with ELT in an average tertiary educational institution. Chapter 3.2 concerns Chinese secondary schools.

Although much effort has been made to improve the teaching of English in China by both Chinese and foreign teachers, the traditional grammar-translation methods, careful explanation of word meaning and usage followed by drills and exercises and the kind of teaching used in Intensive Reading adopted during the period of "Learning from the Soviet Union", are still used all over the country. Progress has been slow in adopting more widely many

of the newer and more effective methods in ELT, although newer textbooks are now used. It is therefore important for us to know more about Intensive Reading, to know why so many English departments and Chinese teachers of English cling to this course and the methods traditionally used to teach it, and to know more about the other 'supplementary' English language courses.

THE COURSES

In a key university, an average college student majoring in English, in the first two years, would probably be following a course of studies consisting of the following components. (Such a student would have had 4 to 6 years of English in a secondary school, acquired a vocabulary of 1500-2000 most frequently used words, a basic knowledge of English grammar, and could read aloud with acceptable pronunciation and intonation. Usually, he could read simple English texts with understanding but would be weak in listening comprehension, speaking and writing.)

English Courses

Intensive Reading (Lexicon, Analytical Reading, Reading I, Spoken And Written English Practice Course) 6-8 periods of 45-50 minutes per week for 1st and 2nd year students, but sometimes as many as 10 periods a week. 3rd year students and perhaps 4th year students have 4-6 periods per week for Intensive Reading with 2-3 periods a week for an introductory course in English and American Literature.

Extensive Reading (Synthetic Reading, Reading II, Home Reading) 2-3 periods per week for 1st and 2nd year students; 3rd and 4th year students have either a second literature course or a course called Readings from the foreign press.

Oral English 2 periods per week

English Grammar 1-2 periods per week

Composition and/or Translation 1-2 periods per week in some schools for 1-3 years, depending on the availability of teachers.

Total: 14-16 periods per week

Other Courses

These courses are all taught in Chinese with the exception of the history and culture of the UK and the USA, which could be taught in English depending on the availability of teachers.

Introduction to Linguistics 1st year, 1st term, 2 periods per week

Introduction to Literary Criticism 1st year, 2nd term, 2 periods per week

History and Culture of the UK 2nd year, 1st term, 2 periods per week

History and Culture of the USA 2nd year, 2nd term, 2 periods per week

World Literature Elective for 2nd year students and may be taken instead of Chinese if the student is not required to take Chinese, 2 periods per week

Chinese 1st year, 2 periods per week

Politics:

History of the Chinese Communist Party 1st year, 2 periods per week
or

Modern History of China 1st year, 2 periods per week

Political Economy 2nd year, 2 periods per week

Physical Education 2 periods per week

Total: 10 periods per week on non-English language courses for a first year student

Grand total: 24-26 periods per week

INTENSIVE READING

Intensive Reading is the main English language course and has been regarded as the core course, with few exceptions, ever since the early 1950s as a result of the movement to "Learn from the Soviet Union". It is best described as an integrated spoken and written general English language course where the meaning and use of words and practical knowledge or use of grammar are taught in relation to the text studied. This is the course where the four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension are practised and a fifth skill, translation, is developed. Six to ten periods a week are devoted to this course, with 8 periods as the norm.

This course has been given different names at different times,

attesting to the fact that even among the Chinese teachers, there have been different views on the nature and purpose of this course over the past forty years. It was first called 'Lexicon' in the Second Period (1951-1956) when word study was thought to be its primary purpose. Later, in the Third Period (1956-1966) it was called 'Analytical Reading' or 'Reading I' to differentiate it from 'Synthetic Reading' or 'Reading II' or 'Extensive Reading', when a consensus was reached that word usage should not be studied apart from its context and when teachers felt that careful analysis of the reading material would improve the students' reading comprehension and help them in their writing and speaking. The task of developing reading speed and other reading skills was given to the Synthetic Reading or Extensive Reading course. Still later the Intensive Reading course was called 'Spoken and Written English Practice', when teachers felt that too much analysis did not help in developing the five skills and that practice in both the spoken and written language was the key. However the practice focused on linguistic competence, with little awareness of communicative competence.

So important is this course that ELT in China cannot be fully understood without knowing something about the teaching materials and the teaching methods.

Since the Intensive Reading course was regarded as the most important course, the best and most experienced teachers were assigned to teach it. As a result, its status was raised still more. Before long the methods used in this course were adopted all over China wherever English was taught, whether in tertiary or in secondary institutions (Chapter 3.2).

Teaching Materials

From 1952 to 1954, the English language textbook used for English majors was *Advanced English*, an English course book compiled in the Soviet Union with a text for reading and word study, followed by grammar and oral and written exercises. Later in 1954, a course book called *English* compiled by Xu Guo Zhang and other Chinese teachers was used for English majors in key universities. It consists of eight volumes for use over four years. The textbooks use a format consisting of a text for reading (500 to 1000 words) followed by a list of new words with parts of speech and the Chinese equivalent, and sometimes an explanation of meaning and use in English. Also included in this list of words

are phrases and idiomatic expressions. In the first four books, there are also sections on phonetics with exercises and short dialogues. All volumes include various exercises — questions on the text, grammar exercises and translation exercises.

The texts for reading are mostly short stories, descriptive passages, dialogues and short plays, various prose passages, and a little poetry. The texts are simplified and graded according to vocabulary frequency and a grammar and structure syllabus. The texts are carefully chosen for content to make sure they are 'progressive' and promote a healthy, positive outlook on life with controversial matter deleted. They usually deal with factory workers, farmers, or revolutionary heroes. Other selections are made from authors considered by Party cadres as progressive and not harmful. For example, stories by Mark Twain, O. Henry, Charlotte Brontë, Theodore Dreiser, or Charles Dickens were chosen because the content was either critical of the Western capitalist system or revealed certain darker aspects of Western society.

An attempt was made at vocabulary selection and grading of texts according to frequency count (West, Thorndyke). There was some consideration of the needs of a Chinese student in a socialist environment, but there was little concern over his needs should he find himself in an English speaking environment. In fact teachers avoided mentioning this possibility which was politically sensitive, because just before 1949 and soon after, a number of students had gone to Hong Kong and elsewhere, and teachers had criticized themselves during the Thought Reform Movement for failing to inspire their students with patriotism, to cleanse their minds of imperialist influence and persuade them to remain in China to serve the motherland. As a result teachers wanted to avoid any suggestion that their students would later find themselves in a foreign country.

Although Xu Guo Zhang's *English* is still being used in some parts of China, in the hinterland for example, it was largely replaced by new textbooks from 1960 to 1970 compiled by key universities such as the Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute and the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute. Other key universities such as Fudan University and Beijing University used textbooks compiled by their own textbook committees. These were largely grammar-structure based course books which most teachers used with traditional methodology that included text analysis, vocabulary work with the teachers explaining usage and giving

students practice through translation of sentences containing these items. Translation and some oral practice was also used. Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, Nanjing University and others used *English*, a structure based textbook compiled by the English Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, and followed the audiolingual approach. Non-key tertiary institutions followed the lead of these key universities and used course books and methods according to what the head of the English Department or the teachers believed in. This was usually determined by what university they graduated from.

The period, 1978–1989, was a period of change. Newer textbooks embodying both structuralist and communicative ideas were developed and used, and many course books published abroad were also used. Most popular was L. G. Alexander's *New Concept English* but course books compiled abroad for Cambridge University's First Certificate English Examinations were also used.

Interesting new developments in ELT include the latest attempts to develop materials and methods suitable to Chinese learners that apply the communicative approach from 1983 to the present in Guangzhou by Li Xiaojun and her group of teachers in the CECL project (Communicative English for Chinese Learners) (Chapter 5.5). Here materials, *Communicative English for Chinese Learners*, and methods are being developed for English majors by a team of two Canadian teachers and a Chinese teacher.

Another attempt is being made at the English Department of Shanghai International Studies University (the former Shanghai Institute of Foreign Languages). Here a set of five course books called *A New English Course* is being developed by a team of teachers headed by Li Guanyi. This is an attempt to produce course books for English majors that are eclectic in approach and combine both traditional and new ideas and embody structuralist and communicative features — features that have been proved practicable and acceptable to most teachers of English (Chapter 5.8). In Nanjing University, Yue Mei-yun experimented with a skill-based approach to teaching English using material especially put together for this experiment (Chapter 5.4).

In South China new methods and materials for distance ELT have been introduced by the University of East Asia and the South China Normal University, with John Barnes and Shelagh Byron of the University of East Asia preparing both print and audio materials and with administrative and tutorial support by SCNU. The core texts used are drawn from L. G. Alexander's

Mainline series supported by *Student's Guides* and cassettes. The course of instruction, including monthly contact sessions with a tutor, teaches using a methodology that has traditional features but also introduces the communicative approach. The English is practical and useful in the social and occupational situations which most students are in and makes use of the students' ability and his potentiality for hard work and independent study. The methodology of this course of instruction reflects a doctrinal position lying at a point of transition from traditional to modern (Chapters 5.9 and 5.10).

The development and the adoption of new textbooks in the period 1978-1989 show change, improvement and progress, but the widespread use and popularity of L. G. Alexander's *New Concept English* which is often taught with Intensive Reading ideas, and the rapid increase in sales of Li Guan-yi's *A New English Course* which combines traditional Intensive Reading ideas with new ideas show how tenaciously teachers still cling to traditional methods which have been proved effective in their eyes.

From 1987 to June 1989 *A New English Course* was reprinted four times. 39,500 copies of Book 1A, 44,000 copies of Book 1B, 33,500 copies of Book 2, 38,000 copies of Book 3 and 25,000 copies of Book 4 were sold.

Teaching Methods

The Intensive Reading course starts in the first year of college with 3 to 6 weeks of phonetics, the length of time depending on the needs of the students. The phonetic symbols of Daniel Jones are learned and all English sounds are carefully taught and thoroughly drilled. Since most students have studied English for 4 to 6 years in secondary school, this stage of teaching really means a boring review for some of the better students, but for about half it means a difficult period of 'drilling in' good pronunciation and 'drilling out' mistakes while reading phonetic symbols, words, phrases, sentences, dialogues and passages. In reading dialogues and passages, some attention is paid to intonation.

After this first stage, students start to study the passages for reading. Going through a process more or less according to the following steps:

Step 1: Assignment and Homework

Students study the new lesson for 2-3 hours at home or in the dormitory before going to class.

- If recorders are available, students listen to a recording of the new words and the text. They learn to pronounce and spell the new words and learn their meaning, usually a Chinese equivalent, from a list of new words in the textbook. The word lists are recorded on tape and students practise by pronouncing the new words by imitating the recording.
- Students read the text for comprehension. They often analyze the difficult sentences grammatically, and note those points they do not understand, so they can ask questions later in class on meaning, grammar and usage.
- Students read the text aloud, trying to imitate the recording, which is specially made with blank spaces after each sense group or phrase to allow them to repeat the phrase. This is carried out in the key universities but not in those colleges which do not have the personnel or equipment to prepare the tapes and or have facilities for the students to listen to such recordings. The more conscientious students get up an hour before breakfast and after doing morning exercises, practise reading aloud for at least half an hour. Some even attempt to memorize and recite the passage. At Fudan University, for example, students might be seen, book in hand, reading aloud or reciting passages, while walking slowly around the campus, early in the morning. This was especially true from 1951 to 1961, and from 1978 to 1984.

Step 2: Classwork: Reading, Explanation and Analysis

The text is studied in class for 3-4 periods of 45-50 minutes each.

- Some students are chosen to read selected passages of the text in class so the teacher can check and correct their pronunciation and intonation, for their own and the class's benefit. Instruction on reading and help is given. Students who have special difficulties are given help outside class. Some teachers also use this time to demonstrate how the

passage should be read, pointing out the words to be stressed and the intonation to be used.

- Students are given a chance to ask questions on difficult points in the text, which are then explained carefully with examples.
- In some classes the teacher may or may not answer the questions asked. If he considers that, the student should be able to answer the question himself especially after a hint is given, the teacher would probably ask the student a question to call his attention to some point he has not considered, and a class discussion follows. The object is to lead the student to discover the answer for himself.
- The teacher explains and analyzes the more difficult points of vocabulary, grammar (often points of syntax), usage of words, function of words and phrases, rhetoric, style, appropriateness and perhaps content. In some classes, this explanation is usually combined with questions, and a discussion of these points in English.
- Some teachers may ask questions on content, on the main idea of a paragraph or the main idea of the whole selection, the purpose of the writer, or some questions involving inference, but this is usually not done, and then only in the second or third year.

Step 3: Word Study

In this stage which usually takes 1-2 periods per week, the teacher goes into the question of how a word or phrase is used. Usually the teacher gives examples of the various uses and meanings of a word, each example followed by an oral translation exercise of one or more sentences in Chinese in which the word is used in the way indicated by the example. Some teachers include an explanation of when the word is used, and may go into questions of register and appropriateness, and questions of choice when various synonyms are considered. Also, a teacher may mention possible mistakes, due to cross-cultural problems or differences in connotation between the English word and the Chinese 'equivalent'.

Step 4: Consolidation

Classwork usually takes 2-3 periods per week.

- Pattern drill through oral translation:
Commonly used sentence patterns or structures, which the teacher feels his students cannot use, are selected from the passage, analyzed and drilled one at a time through oral translation. Some teachers use contrastive analysis, contrasting English with Chinese structures, and sentence patterns or word order to show where mistakes are likely to occur due to the influence of the mother tongue. Where possible, the new vocabulary is incorporated in this drill and old vocabulary is reviewed.
- Oral translation to review the uses of words, phrases, phrasal verbs dealt with in *Step 3* is done orally in class. Sometimes problems of usage and function are taken up.
- Questions on the text are asked, and students are expected to answer these questions according to their understanding of the text. There may be a discussion of the text at this stage.
- Students may be asked to retell the story or give a summary of the main idea of the text.
- A written quiz may be given to the students.

Homework

Written exercises:

- Blank filling: filling the blanks with the correct articles, prepositions, correct tenses, choice of words, correct form of words, plurals
- Transformation: active-passive, plural-singular, changes in tense, person, word order, affirmation-negation
- Translation: sentence or paragraph translation
- Sentence making
- Answering questions on content

Oral exercises:

- Reading the text aloud
 - Reading phonetic exercises aloud
- This may be recorded in a language laboratory if the

equipment is available. Some are checked by the teacher and individual help may be given to the students with special difficulties.

- Recitation of short dialogues, speeches and stories. Preparation for extracurricular activities such as recitation contests.

Step 5: Freer Practice

Classwork usually takes 1-2 periods per week.

- Class discussion of the text, its theme, significance, purpose of the author, questions of opinion and questions involving inference, and other questions of interest
- Role playing based on a story that had been read or studied
- Debate on questions arising out of discussions of the text

Homework

- Composition based on the text
- For the better students, report on extracurricular reading

Views about Intensive Reading

Most teachers stop at *Step 4* either because they regard *Step 5* as a waste of time, or because they do not regard it as their responsibility since their course is to mainly teach reading and word study, or because they do not regard it as sufficiently important to make time for it. They often stress their lack of time, and their need to teach words or the necessity to go on to the next lesson in order to keep up with the stipulated teaching schedule. *Step 5* is taken in some of the key universities and foreign language institutes when classes are taught by one of the more innovative teachers but seldom elsewhere.

Considering the time spent on explanation and analysis of sentences and words and their usage, grammatical points and other points of language and the comparatively little time spent on exercises and oral use and almost no time spent on real communication, it is obvious that in most classes both teachers and students are really interested in getting knowledge about the English language rather than in developing communicative competence and habits of correct use. The four skills of using the English language are not developed naturally nor with any facility in communicating ideas. Teachers are often not aware of the

importance of spending adequate time to develop these habits and oral skills, and instead spend more time debating the precise function of an adverbial modifier or some point of grammar than in improving reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking and writing.

When time is given to practice, the broader goals of quick and easy comprehension and communication are subordinated to the narrower goals of grammatical and lexical accuracy in reading and writing. Greater attention is given to studying the forms of language than to meaning and often it seems that language is studied almost divorced from content and meaning. Almost no time and attention is given to practice in developing skills in using the language to express the student's own thoughts in normal conversation or discussion.

Much time and effort is given to the explanation and memorization of individual words and their use as well as the text, in the belief that language proficiency is increased by the number of words or texts mastered, a belief that has developed out of the traditional way of learning classical Chinese by memorizing words and texts of exemplary writing or gems of literature. The result is that in the classroom "... the text is used as a pretext for the intensive examination of the language it contains", (Chapter 5.1). As Maley has also pointed out, "... instead of learning how to extract meaning and information as quickly and efficiently as possible, and learning how to apply this information to their own needs and interests", students are analyzing the sentences to see the relationship of parts and to see how well they know their rules of grammar. Instead of spending time using the words to express their own thoughts, students are memorizing words and storing them in their brain for later use. This may help them in their reading comprehension, but it may also result in their not being able to understand a passage, because students usually remember only one meaning of a word. When it is used with a different meaning, they either misunderstand the passage or find the passage incomprehensible.

It should be noted however that some students say that Intensive Reading really helps them improve their reading comprehension, and prove it by pointing to the high marks obtained by Chinese students in TOEFL tests and successful performance in studies abroad. These students probably have been helped by other factors such as effective teaching in their Intensive and Extensive Reading courses and Listening

Comprehension courses, as well as their ability to analyze texts learned in Intensive Reading. Other students criticize Intensive Reading because it takes them through a text on a word by word or phrase by phrase basis so they develop the habit of reading all texts slowly, translating word by word into Chinese, resulting in many not being able to understand what they read without translation. Some teachers note that the poorer students cannot think while they read, nor anticipate, guess, predict or ask themselves questions. They often have difficulty in catching the thread of an argument, getting the main point or purpose of the author or seeing the relationship between the parts. They also have difficulty in distinguishing what is important from the unimportant, and seeing the significance of important details.

Most of the older teachers are not too worried over this situation, since they memorized the Chinese classics as a student without comprehension. They say that when they studied Chinese classics, they were not expected to understand what they memorized but later, when they were older, they all 'suddenly understood what they memorized'. They believe it is the same with the use of words and phrases learned by rote. Students may not be able to use them at first, but later they will be remembered and used correctly. No attempt was made to encourage creativity in the majority of cases. Creativity, it is believed, flows naturally, in time, from discipline and proficiency in rote memorization.

However, criticism of Intensive Reading has been made ever since it was first introduced, and still continues (Chapter 5). As early as 1955, many Chinese teachers of English criticized some of the methods used in Intensive Reading after Marshal Chen Yi, then the Chinese Foreign Minister, spoke on ELT in China in that year and expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of many English department graduates who were assigned to the Foreign Ministry, because:

- they read too slowly often word by word (average speed about 50–80 words a minute) and could not understand what they read in the foreign press
- they could not understand English spoken by native speakers at normal speed, especially if the speech contained colloquial expressions, idioms, irony or sarcasm, or jokes, nor could they understand BBC editorial comment, or follow closely a discussion on current affairs over the Voice of America

- they could not speak clearly and naturally, and often did not know what to say because they were not familiar with many of the accepted Western practices of good manners
- their written and oral English was often not idiomatic, was ungrammatical, awkward and difficult to understand, and could be described as a kind of 'Chinese-English' using English equivalents of Chinese words arranged according to Chinese word order.

Native speakers had difficulty in understanding their spoken English also because of their poor pronunciation and strange choice of words, for example, instead of saying 'pork chops' an interpreter might say 'swine bone meat'. In a speech to foreign language teachers about ELT, Marshal Chen said, "When our interpreters spoke English, our foreign friends thought they were speaking Chinese!" He asked foreign language teachers to redouble their efforts to improve the effectiveness of their teaching so that future graduates would be more intelligible, and could communicate effectively with China's English-speaking friends. Chinese teachers' views of Intensive Reading can be found in Chapters 5.2 and 5.4 and foreign criticisms and views can be found in Chapters 5.1, 5.7 and 5.8.

Although many have criticized Intensive Reading and some changes have been made in key universities, the traditional methods such as careful textual and grammatical analysis, grammar-translation methods, substitution-pattern drills, are still used. Also used is the teaching of word usage by careful explanation, the illustration of its use through examples and its consolidation, again through translation exercises.

College students feel that the teaching of grammar combined with analysis of sentences in the texts helps them understand grammar better, because they study it not in isolation but in the context of the text. They feel that as adults they have already developed abilities to grasp abstract theory and concepts, as well as abilities to analyze, and so they can use these skills in studying a text and grammar. They believe that the ability to analyze a sentence grammatically, once learned, becomes a valuable tool to aid better comprehension, and that the knowledge and skills learned through this process, later also help them in their written and oral English, because it enables them to use this grammatical knowledge in putting together sentences in English. At the same

time, the translation exercise enables them to see how accurately they can express the Chinese sentence in English. If mistakes are made, they can be pinpointed, analyzed and corrected quickly and efficiently. They admit, however, that the English produced in this way is often not idiomatic or natural, when this is pointed out to them by native speakers.

These methods have continued to be the mainstay of ELT in China. Where changes and improvements have occurred, they have been in the direction of giving contexts and situation to drills, making students aware of functions/notions, increasing the amount of interactive exercises where meaning has increasing importance in addition to form and structure. Also, the proportion of time and effort spent on improving the students' oral English through methods inspired by recent articles and papers on the Communicative Approach is being given careful consideration and where conditions allow, such as the presence of foreign teachers, classes and courses using new approaches, ideas and methods are put into the curriculum although usually on an experimental basis.

EXTENSIVE READING

Having learned the structures and also the ways that English speaking people use words, most Chinese English language teachers believe that skills in reading better and faster will be developed through the Extensive Reading course. Thus, Intensive Reading could be seen as a course teaching students how to understand by using grammatical analysis, by analysis of context and use of words in their reading. Intensive Reading is also the course where knowledge about language and some preliminary practice is provided. Extensive Reading, on the other hand, is the course where other reading skills — speed, prediction and making inferences — can be developed, where good reading habits can be formed, where appreciation and enjoyment can be developed and where there is practice in getting the gist, in summarizing main ideas, in understanding the author's purpose and theme, and where different interpretations are discussed. The course involves wide reading of 2-6 thousand word texts of relatively easier but interesting reading per week in some of the more successful courses. For instance, Fudan University uses material selected by its textbook committee and Hangzhou Teacher's College uses material published by Reader's Digest. Extensive Reading in

China has been successful and has been welcomed by students when taught with these aims in view, but not when teachers teach Extensive Reading like a second Intensive Reading course.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION COURSE

In many colleges there is also a Listening Comprehension course. Both material published abroad and material prepared in China (e.g., a book developing listening comprehension prepared by the East China Teachers' University in Shanghai) have been used. In addition, recordings, which are made from VOA and BBC news broadcasts and other programmes, are used as listening material. On the whole, this course has been successful and popular not only because the material is interesting, but because the course really helps to develop the students' listening comprehension.

ORAL ENGLISH COURSE

The Oral English course is usually offered only in key universities and foreign language institutes. Its aim is to develop the students' spoken English, but its success usually depends on the teacher's experience, organizing ability, understanding of the student's needs, and power to arouse interest and the confidence to speak. It has often become a 'recitation course' where the dialogues which were supposed to be impromptu are actually written beforehand, memorized and then recited. It is nevertheless regarded as useful in providing students with common words and expressions which can be used in a number of 'real' situations. Since these words may not appear in the texts of Intensive Reading or Extensive Reading, students, always eager to extend their vocabulary, welcome the chance to learn. However, there is dissatisfaction over the methods used and over the slow progress in developing their oral English.

WRITING SKILLS

As for writing skills, there are translation courses and composition courses. Often a model is provided and analyzed so that the

student may be aware of the characteristics of unity, organization, coherence and style that should be aimed at in writing composition. After the student has written his composition, it is corrected and may be handed back to be improved upon after discussion. Comments and suggestions for improving are made regularly. In addition the teacher deals with certain points of language and style and relates them to the student's work and certain common or typical mistakes. These courses could be more successful, if more time could be given to them but because it is so difficult to persuade teachers to teach them or to find suitable teachers, only key universities and foreign language institutes offer them. These courses involve a lot of work for both students and teachers. Students often do not want to spend so much time on a skills course and teachers often have little time for the great amount of correction work which they involve. The teachers must have not only a good command of English and teaching experience, but also a good grasp of grammar and an understanding of style and appropriateness. However, many of these teachers find it more lucrative to spend time doing translation work than teaching.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR COURSE

The English Grammar Course is usually taught in the first or second year. There is a brief review of selected items, followed by exercises which aim at discovering and diagnosing the weak spots in the students' grasp of grammar. This is then followed by further explanation of those points not understood with further follow-up exercises.

CONCLUSION

This is a brief, generalized description of ELT in China at present in typical language courses in tertiary institutions, the past, its development and improvements for the future are touched on. If this description is viewed in the light of the historical background, we can see that ELT in China has been influenced by the way that the Chinese language was traditionally taught and learned, by the early teachers from the West, by the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party in implementing Party policy and carrying out

the movement to "Learn from the Soviet Union", by the efforts of many Chinese teachers of English and by the efforts of many teachers, linguists and scholars from the West, especially in the period of reform. The effort is still going on (Chapter 5), and although changes and progress are evident in the key universities, especially those in Beijing and those in former treaty ports such as Shanghai and Nanjing, taken as a whole, the progress has been slow. This is to be expected in such a large backward country involving so many people where only very limited funds in relation to the population are being spent on education.

In order to appreciate the difficulties that must be overcome in ELT in tertiary institutions before much greater progress can be made, we need to see how English is now being taught in secondary schools (Chapter 3.2) as well as examine in detail the factors affecting the teachers, the students and administrators (Chapter 4).

Teaching English in Chinese Secondary Schools

Hu Yining

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English described here may be regarded as representative of large areas of China, and is based on my experience and observations in Anhui Province — a rather remote and mountainous region. The quality of ELT in Anhui may not be as good as in China's good secondary schools in the big coastal cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin or Xiamen, and can certainly not be compared to the teaching in China's special Foreign Language Secondary Schools, but it is better than teaching in the poorer provinces like Jiangxi.

In the special Foreign Language Secondary Schools ELT is conducted and directed by experienced teachers. These schools are affiliated to and staffed by well-trained graduates of China's teachers' universities, foreign language institutes or certain key universities. The Shanghai Foreign Language Secondary School, for example, is affiliated to and staffed by the Shanghai International Studies University. Here, besides English language classes, other classes such as history, geography and science are also taught in English. Experiments to improve ELT corresponding to those carried out in tertiary institution are made, and a very high level of proficiency in English is reached.

On the other hand, in the poorer provinces like Jiangxi

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Province in the eastern part of China, ELT has a great many difficulties still to overcome, and the quality of teaching is rather poor.

The following statistics are taken from the Jiangxi Provincial Education Commission's 1988-89 Year Report. There are 13,754 middle school English teachers working in over 80 counties in the province. Of these teachers, only 691 have completed a four-year college education, 4,549 have only received a three-year college certificate of graduation, and 8,514 are classified as 'under-qualified' because the training these teachers have received in English does not go beyond the third year college level, for example, worker, peasant, soldier or (WPS) students who studied sporadically one to three years in colleges or universities during the Cultural Revolution. The province sets the normal ratio of English teacher to student at 1:180 (one teacher working with three 60-student classes), but the present ratio is 1:340 (which means either the teacher is over-worked or English is not offered). The province needs 12,246 more middle school teachers to meet the normal ratio of 1:180.

The secondary schools referred to here are the secondary schools in my district — Huang Shan City, Anhui Province. Several years ago, when primary schools in other places began to teach English as a compulsory subject, many secondary schools here still did not have English classes because of the lack of teachers and consequently, English teaching has a much shorter history than elsewhere. Bearing this in mind, you will not be surprised at the facts and situations I describe here.

Method of Teaching

According to the *Syllabus for Middle School English* issued by the government, the purpose of English teaching is to lay solid foundations for the students' use and for further study. This is right and blameless, of course, but what does this foundation mean? Many teachers here think that this foundation just means learning the most commonly used vocabulary and essential grammar rules. They think that to teach listening and speaking is a waste of time as few students will have the chance to communicate directly with native English speakers or to become English professionals. The great majority of them will be workers and farmers, who may or may not have the chance to read some English. Therefore, to meet the students' needs, all or most of the

class should spend time on reading and on developing reading skills. And for this purpose, it is assumed that all one needs is a good command of grammar and a large vocabulary. As a result, most teachers totally neglect the training of their students' communicative abilities in their teaching. Most of them have been using and are still using the grammar-translation method. Time is spent on reading what is printed in the textbooks, but the students' talking time is zero and the teachers' talking time in English is nearly zero. They teach English simply by speaking Chinese!

The usual order of each lesson is as follows: First, the students read aloud the new words and expressions by imitating their teacher. The teacher tries to help them to remember the Chinese meaning of each word by reading it mechanically again and again; then, having translated them one by one, the students read the pattern drills in the same way with the same purpose.

Then the teacher begins to deal with the text, sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph: explaining the language points, dwelling upon the grammar rules, analyzing the sentences, providing the Chinese equivalents, giving examples to show the usage of certain words and expressions... This procedure is most time-consuming. Sometimes, teaching only one short paragraph can take a whole period of 45-50 minutes.

The next thing is to teach the grammar rules. In each lesson, there are usually two or three of these rules. The teacher explains and illustrates them by pointing to examples in the text or by taking examples from dictionaries or grammar books. Finally, the written exercises are done by filling in the blanks with proper verbs, or prepositions, or adverbs, or adjectives; translating sentences into Chinese or vice versa; or doing multiple choice exercises.

Throughout the whole teaching process, the students sit there silently and passively neither speaking English nor listening to spoken English. Many of my present students tell me that they have never spoken a complete English sentence on their own and they have never heard any recordings of native English speakers during the six long years in secondary schools.

Nowadays, more and more graduates (although it is far from enough) from teachers' colleges and universities are joining the teaching staff, bringing with them modern language and teaching skills. They are really trying hard to slowly change the situation of English teaching here and eventually I believe, they will succeed.

Textbooks

The textbook series called *English* used in the secondary schools consists of nine volumes: six for junior high and three for senior high students. There are also teachers' books and tapes of pattern drills and texts to go with the textbooks. This is the only authorized set of textbooks. It was compiled by a textbook writing group under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education. First completed in 1977 and revised in 1982, it is now being used by all secondary schools in the country.

A look at the general arrangement of the individual lessons in the set of books under discussion clearly indicates its approach. The arrangement of the individual lessons is uniform in the six volumes for junior high, but the format is different in the three volumes for senior high. The order in the junior high textbooks is drills, dialogues or texts or both, new words and expressions (with Chinese equivalents), everyday sentences (only in Volumes One and Two), grammar (beginning with Volume Three), and exercises including spelling, pronunciation, sentence-making, dialogue construction, grammar exercises, and translation.

This is apparently neither a typical structural approach nor a conventional one. It is a composite format, which contains both audiolingualism and traditionalism. Significant to note is that in the first two volumes audiolingualism is dominant but beginning with Volume Three there is a swing to traditionalism as more grammar is introduced.

In the three senior high textbooks, the pattern drill disappears entirely and grammar returns in full strength. It is here that traditionalism finally becomes dominant. This change in emphasis reveals the writers' endeavour to break away from the traditional approach and adopt an aural-oral approach, and it also reveals the dilemma in trying to make the teaching materials meet the reading objective which is set by the National Syllabus for English in secondary schools.

To use the textbooks to advantage, the textbook writers offer five methodological suggestions, or rather principles, in the teachers' manual to Volume One of the textbook series:

- A foreign language is a tool and a weapon, which should be taught for use. We should teach English rather than teach about it. In learning English, practice is the key. Reasons, definitions, and rules are necessary, but they can only be

learned through a large number of drills.

- In teaching, priority should be given to listening and speaking. The new teaching method of 'putting listening and speaking first' or 'giving priority to listening and speaking' represents a change of approach to all foreign language instruction. The teachers' manual insists (a) listening and speaking should be the chief means of teaching in the beginning and intermediate stages; (b) words and sentences should be explained in English with the aid of objects, pictures, actions, expressions and situations while Chinese should be used judiciously, especially in teaching beginners; and (c) nothing should be read before it is heard and spoken.
- Attention should be paid to the teaching of phonetics through all stages, and serious training should be given in spelling. A good command of phonetics will help promote the entire learning process. Spelling has always been difficult for Chinese students. To overcome this difficulty, the students' pronunciation should be corrected and they should be acquainted with the spelling rules.
- The language should be taught through pattern drills and grammar should be taught through drills and in an inductive way. Drills are a main component of the junior high textbooks. To teach and learn through drills rather than through rules makes it possible to give priority to listening and speaking. To make the drills more lively and effective, they should be placed in situations. Rules can be taught only after ample practice of the pattern has been taught.
- 'Way-paving' and 'accumulation' should be practised; certain grammar items, words and expressions should appear in earlier lessons before they are taught formally. While we teach the new, the old should be reviewed.

To summarize, we can see that the textbook writers have made a bold and inspiring attempt to combine audiolingualism and traditionalism in their new set of teaching materials, which, despite its many defects, is the best set of instructional texts for English ever compiled by Chinese scholars. The aural-oral method has been suggested for teaching the new books, especially in the

beginning and intermediate stages, and priority should be given to listening and speaking in a balanced development of the four skills. But in the actual use of the books, teachers have changed things greatly from the writers' original intentions. To cope with the various tests and exams, up to now, nothing has been done to test the students' listening and speaking ability. Most teachers spend all the teaching time on vocabulary and grammar. So when they graduate from secondary school, the students, after learning English for six years, will have nothing more than some separate words (at most 2000) and grammar rules and fragments of some of the texts. You can imagine the effectiveness of English teaching here.

The Teachers

You may ask, "What kind of secondary school teachers are they and what is their training like?"

In the countryside, teachers of English are badly needed. Among the present teachers, those who graduated from teachers' colleges or normal schools are the ones with the highest level of schooling, but they only make up a very small percentage. The rest of the teachers, who constitute the larger proportion, are secondary school graduates. Some are even junior high graduates who have only studied English for two or three years. Some secondary school headmasters seem to think that if a person knows some English, or even knows a little English, then he can teach English. One of my former secondary school classmates is teaching English in the countryside now. Several years ago, she was chosen to be an English teacher simply because she was the only person in the commune who had learned English at school. She frankly told me that if she taught a wrong word or spoke a wrong sentence, nobody would know and all her students would diligently follow her. I once tested my students' phonetics when they entered our college as English majors and I found more than a third of the students read 'hotel' as /'hɒtəl/, 'always' as /ɔl'weiz/ and 'interesting' as /intris'tɪŋ/.

Most teachers obviously lack sufficient knowledge and systematic training in teaching methodology. Their language proficiency, especially oral proficiency, needs to be improved greatly. Even those who have graduated from teacher's colleges still lack teaching experience. As a result, Chinese is still used as the language of instruction in the classrooms and discipline as well

as motivation problems are serious. The percentage of dropout increases in the higher grades. The teachers just neglect (or say, they are unable) to teach culture. They don't know how to use audio-visual aids to advantage even if they have any.

Besides the problem of teachers' quality there is also a serious lack of teaching equipment and facilities. In our city, there are more than a hundred secondary schools, but for most of them, tape-recorders, radios, tapes of English, and typewriters are out of reach. Throughout the whole city, only one school has built a language laboratory — the No. One Middle School, a key school of the city and of the province.

Improvement

Looking at these problems and the present situation, I want to make a few suggestions for improvement.

Firstly, the retraining of the in-service teachers must be accomplished urgently. As the overwhelming majority of present English teachers will do the bulk of teaching English in the secondary schools, and as many of them have not received proper training, the development of their language skills and teaching competence will be of great significance to the development of the profession. We can have short-term courses in which teachers can receive strict training in all four skills, acquire knowledge of teaching methodology, learn and practise effective teaching methods and techniques, attend lectures on current methodological trends, obtain information on the latest developments in ELT and study the available teaching material.

Secondly, in talking about the aims of our English teaching, I think, besides teaching the students vocabulary and grammar, we must also enable them to relate the linguistic forms to communicative functions, non-linguistic reality and social context. We should help the students to develop creative abilities to use the foreign grammatical system for communicating new meaning in any situation and to use English that is appropriate to their needs as a language user. In short, to develop the students' abilities to use the language in effective communication.

The general teaching principles should be the following:

- No effort should be spared to motivate the students to think and speak English in the classroom. The development of

communicative skills can only take place when the students' motivation and enthusiasm are constantly sustained.

- The teaching should be student-centred. To learn the language, the students themselves must go through the process of learning. In the classroom, the students must always be actively involved in communicative activities requiring speaking, listening, writing, reading and thinking.
- The teacher should have a diversity of methods and techniques at his disposal. To be a good teacher is not an easy job. He has to change his teaching methods and techniques in order to keep the students interested and motivated all the time. He has to try to learn, to invent and to use various ways of organizing communicative activities to liven up the classroom and to sustain the students' motivation. If he uses the same particular technique even twice, the students may lose interest and fail to cooperate.
- The students' existing knowledge should be acknowledged. The teacher should have a clear idea about the students' level of each of the communication skills in the target language. Otherwise, he will find it hard to decide where to start, what to teach and how to teach. The teacher should make the students learn through use itself. It is only through use — plenty of use — that the students' communicative abilities can be developed. The language classroom should be task-oriented and a lesson should be a series of tasks to be performed by the students.

English through English

Nowadays, teaching English through English is a highly recommended method in ELT. However, whether it is possible and beneficial for Chinese secondary schools is still in dispute. Therefore, before we come to any conclusion, we need to analyze the advantages and disadvantages first.

Firstly, it can provide an English environment in the classroom. The students can hear English spoken all the time and eventually get the feel, or sense, of the language.

Secondly, the students may be highly motivated and mentally active simply because of curiosity and the wish to keep up with

what is going on. That is, the students might be very attentive and the teaching might thus be very effective.

Thirdly, by using the method of teaching English through English, both the teacher and students will have the opportunity to learn how to communicate effectively and imaginatively in English.

But this is only one side of the picture. There is no perfect teaching method. Teaching English through English also has some disadvantages.

Firstly, since most teachers are non-native speakers, nobody can be sure that they speak and teach 'pure' and 'real' English. They might, quite possibly, speak and teach 'Chinglish'.

Secondly, this method of teaching is more time-consuming, for instance, in teaching vocabulary, if we have to spend several minutes to explain a single word and the students may be still confused, why not translate it directly into Chinese?

Thirdly, teaching English through English cannot be used effectively to deal with all situations. It is fine for teaching colloquial and simple English, but it is difficult for teaching abstract or scientific vocabulary and the students may get more and more confused as many teachers cannot make themselves understood in English.

Teaching English through English has some drawbacks and cannot cure all ills. As a conclusion, I suggest that Chinese teachers of English use English as much as possible and use Chinese whenever necessary.

Teachers, Students and Administrators

Y. F. Dzau

To understand the development of ELT in China, it is necessary to understand not only the historical background but also the various factors which affect the teachers, the students and the Party and administrative staff. We now look at the position, role and problems of Chinese English language teachers and the factors affecting them; student attitudes, beliefs and study habits; and finally the relations between English language teachers and the Party/administrative officials who make up the leadership of an English Department, as well as the factors affecting them.

CHINESE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

How Chinese English language teachers teach and regard their role as teachers has a great effect on ELT student proficiency in English and on future developments.

Like other teachers in China, English language teachers are hard working, conscientious and are highly respected as the source of knowledge, wisdom and direction and are often expected to be models of virtue. They are also expected to give moral and, if possible, political guidance. The students especially regard him/her as an authority on all questions they may raise. This role has unfortunate consequences, as the teacher cannot afford to make mistakes or to acknowledge that he doesn't know the answer to any question, and so he is often on the defensive. This role also militates against the use of a problem-solving approach in the classroom (Chapter 5.10). Furthermore, Chinese teachers feel an acute need for answer keys to protect their own

security and resist the adoption of new methodologies, such as the communicative approach, which may reveal to the students their own inadequacies in the use of English. This role may also give rise to resistance by both teachers and students to methods which give students a greater role in the teaching-learning process.

Political Factors against Progress

Ironically, this traditional and highly respected role of the teacher is in unfortunate contrast to his low political and social position as an intellectual in the Chinese socialist state. As an intellectual, he has long been regarded with suspicion by the majority of Party cadres, most of whom come from the People's Liberation Army, the countryside or the factories and have not received much education. There may be an element of jealousy, but the important point is that intellectuals, especially English language teachers, and Party cadres come from two different worlds. The intellectuals usually come from families who have been comparatively well-off, landlords or capitalists, and who therefore have the means and opportunity to send their children to school and college; whereas the cadres often come from much poorer families in the countryside, poor peasants or farm labourers, and from areas where educational opportunities are limited, and where in many cases poverty and oppression by the landlord led cadres to join the Communist revolution in their youth. Political necessity and Party policy which aroused the workers and peasants to join the revolution also led to their being given a higher political position during the revolutionary period. This policy continued after the Communist Party came into power in 1949 and remained basically unchanged until 1978, when, at least in theory, intellectuals were to be considered as *intellectual workers* and treated as members of the working class.

Within the class of intellectuals, there are further divisions between those who are Party members, Youth League members, members of democratic parties, those who have no political affiliations, those who have been branded rightists, those who have committed various mistakes or crimes, or have been simply branded as 'backward', and those who have too many capitalist ideas or friends and relatives abroad. Party members and Youth League members belong to the privileged leading group. The others, realizing their relatively inferior political position, usually speak and act with deference.

In addition, the teacher's low political position also makes him wary of close contacts with foreign teachers and unwilling to use the new material that they recommend without prior approval and clearance by Party leaders. The fact that it is very difficult for a teacher to leave a college or school also makes it a much more serious matter to offend the leaders of a department, especially Party leaders, and to find himself in disfavour.

The political position of the teacher is further complicated as it is subject to the stresses of political movements which have occurred virtually continually ever since 1949 and to the conflicting views within the Party on policy towards the intellectuals. Usually, when Party leadership is in the hands of liberals and when the services of the intellectuals are felt to be needed for improving the economy, they are given better treatment and have more say. However, during political movements and when questions of security and loyalty to the Party are felt to be more important, then the intellectuals are usually the first to feel pressure and doubts about their loyalty.

Among intellectuals, the political position of university teachers is especially weak, because they are regarded as being closer to the capitalist or landlord classes than the secondary school teachers, since they had more money to get higher academic qualifications, and also socially closer and economically they often serve their interests by working for them in various capacities. Furthermore, English language teachers in the universities are suspected of having sympathies with British and American imperialists and are helping them carry out 'cultural invasion'. In any case, the thoughts and interests of university teachers are often thought to reflect the poisonous influences of the imperialist powers, and this is a matter of grave concern.

The low economic position of the intellectuals is another serious problem and is in dire need of improvement, if only to attract more intelligent young men and women to the ranks of the teachers. Unlike the Soviet Union, China, under the Chinese Communist Party, does not reward, economically or politically, young people for the extra time and effort required to get a good education, or to get the skills and expertise necessary for good administration. The weak political position of the intellectuals and their inferior numbers in comparison to the workers and peasants in the Party do not provide any leverage for improvement of their economic position, and any attempt to give them greater economic reward is usually thwarted by the majority of policy

makers who come from the worker peasant classes, and who at most might agree to equal treatment, but would certainly object to any great increase in the salary scale of the intellectuals. This is part of the revolutionary tradition carried on from the pre-liberation days when equality was stressed, and all cadres received only a minimum allowance for miscellaneous expenses, but enjoyed free housing, clothing, food and transportation provided by the state. When the Communist Party took power, a salary scale was worked out allowing slight rank differences according to seniority, years of service, educational and other qualifications.

In the early days of Communist administration, the policy towards a small group of old intellectuals, who had remained to serve the new regime, was to allow them to keep their comparatively high pay. However, this pay was reduced in varying percentages for anyone who made a political mistake, especially during political movements. There was also an attempt to get these intellectuals to 'voluntarily' give up part of their salary. This was considered to be evidence that they had made progress in thought reform. In most cases a state salary scale was worked out and most intellectuals were given a rank which gave them a slight increase from the income they received before 1949 and this gave them a modest living.

Later, in the latter part of the 1980s, the real income of intellectuals in state institutions was reduced by inflation. The state made efforts to reduce the subsequent hardship by giving everyone a special allowance. At present the income of teachers is usually lower than that of workers who often get substantial bonuses and other fringe benefits. For example, teachers of state schools can get free medical care for themselves, but not for members of their families, whereas workers (and teachers in factory-operated schools) get free medical care not only for themselves but also substantial care for their family members. As entrepreneurs took advantage of certain free market features of the economy and made big profits and as inflation continued at a faster rate, there was general dissatisfaction on the part of both intellectuals and workers whose income was fixed according to the state salary scale. At present the actual incomes of different classes of people do not correspond to the contribution they make to the state, nor is there any effective policy to govern changes in incomes of the various classes of people to give economic incentives beneficial to the national economy and economic

growth. The current complaint is that a college professor earns much less than a vendor selling crabs, fish, water melons or other agricultural produce in great demand, while those who are in positions of power usually have the means of getting some of the profits made in various businesses.

However, since 1983 good English language teachers, especially college teachers in big cities, surprisingly, have had many opportunities of earning extra income by moonlighting, because of the big demand for English lessons, but for the majority of ordinary English language teachers, these opportunities are few and far between.

The low political and economic position of English language teachers have acted as an inhibiting force against progress and change, affecting negatively their desire to improve English language teaching or to support proposals for changes. Teachers cannot afford to make political mistakes. They not only have to examine the political content of any proposal, but they have to examine the political content of all new texts. Whether they are making proposals or supporting someone else's, they have to speak carefully, firstly to ensure that there is nothing to be interpreted as contrary to Party policy, and secondly to ensure that nothing is implied to make Party leaders lose face or feel that what was done in the past was wrong or was not an 'achievement'. The glory of the revolution and the revolutionary leaders and their image as wise, strong leaders who made correct policies has to be preserved. In this situation it is usually wiser, and politically safer to follow the crowd and be a 'yes man' than to take risks in proposing changes because changes implied that something was not good and might reflect on some leader. Not only might some 'vested' interest be affected but also some political implication may be made to the proposer's discredit and he may be accused of ulterior motives. Most people keep in mind an old Chinese saying: "the hunter's rifle always hits the first bird which rises out of the bushes".

In addition to these factors, English language teachers, especially the younger ones have been confused by changes in policies with regard to promotion. For example, at first teachers who did not have a full four year university education (for example the Worker, Peasant, Soldier teacher who studied briefly in the university during the Cultural Revolution) needed a teaching qualification, such as an ATTC certificate (Advanced Teachers' Training Course). Later a master's degree was required

for promotion to lecturership. Still later an ATTC certificate was made an equivalent qualification, with an additional qualification in a second foreign language. Motivation for studying and improving qualifications was strong. However, by 1986, a further condition was imposed: the teacher to be considered for promotion had to be present at post (to induce many teachers to return from foreign countries), but this resulted in teachers who had failed the ATTC entrance exams being promoted over those who had passed and were away studying! The effect on teachers in general was a loss of faith in the value of studying hard (Chapter 6.1).

A word should also be said about job security. This factor and the traditional pride and self respect of intellectuals, a certain traditional respect for teachers carried over from the past, has made the title of 'university teacher' still fairly appealing and prestigious, especially if the teacher belongs to a key university. These factors as well as hope for a better future have helped to preserve some morale and have been factors which worked to get some constructive work done in ELT.

However, the unattractive political and economic position of teachers in general and of English language teachers in particular are important factors causing the loss of many members, especially because a knowledge of English can open many doors for further study abroad, for doing business or for getting better paid jobs in joint ventures or in other enterprises.

As the country becomes more liberal through its reform policies with more and better job opportunities and as inflation continues, the poorly paid teachers have been forced to be practical and 'get jobs with the highest possible pay, but with the lightest responsibility' in order to get the income to provide for family needs (Chapter 6.4). The result is that most teachers cannot be expected to do much creative teaching or serious research.

The profession is also unable to attract or even keep young people, and dedication to education or to teaching English as a career is rarely found. It is becoming increasingly difficult to persuade secondary school graduates to become teachers, or to persuade English language teachers to spend time and effort on improving the quality of teaching. Formerly, science, engineering and medicine had more attraction than the humanities because the latter was ideologically and politically high risk. Now, political, economic and social factors are causing bright secondary school

graduates to forgo college education, and instead go into business. Those less bright are going into vocational schools from which job assignment is local and there is no danger of being sent to primitive mountain or poor country areas.

The traditional practice of acting when there is a consensus, and the unwillingness of most teachers to excel, to be conspicuous or to be 'famous' or to appear to be more popular with students than others also inhibits progress. This practice is in line with the Communist Party's belief in action by the masses and its condemnation of 'hero worship' and of attempts to praise or stress the importance of the individual. Teachers from the more competitive capitalist countries, where individualism has a much more important place in their ethos, often find it difficult to understand this practice and its effects. Actually this tradition is very old. Sometimes it is attributed to superstitions that the gods may be jealous of the success of mortals. Sometimes it is attributed to a sense of modesty and humility inculcated by Confucian ethics of not putting the individual above the group. After 1949, it has been attributed to the communist ideal of action by the 'collective' and not by individuals; fear of the gods has been replaced by fear of the Party cadres. Whatever the origin and cause, it is a very real force and deep in Chinese culture, and serves to reinforce the conservatism and inhibitions caused by the political and economic factors. Most teachers prefer just to follow silently whatever instructions the Party gives and do what the majority does, usually with little or no initiative to try new materials and methods.

The Mother Tongue and ELT

The convictions and beliefs of the average Chinese teacher of English as to how language should be taught have been important in shaping the methodology that is being used in China. These beliefs have their roots in the way Chinese teachers, especially from the older generation, learned their mother tongue.

The Chinese language is based on the 'character' which is basically an ideograph, unlike the English language which is based on the alphabet and a sound system. The Chinese language displays four characteristics:

- Morphemes (characters) are mainly monosyllabic. So the number of morphemes commanded was an indication of the

degree of language proficiency. (The character plays a much more important role in the expression of an idea in Chinese than in English.)

- Chinese is a tone language. (The tone of each character distinguishes the meaning of the character.)
- Chinese is a non-inflected language.
- There is a close correspondence between character and syllable. Each character represents one syllable. (Chang Zhi-gong, 1985).

As Chang Zhi-gong says, the teaching of the Chinese language from ancient times up to the beginning of the Republic always started with the teaching of characters. The textbooks almost invariably made use of rhyming and regularity of sentences, so that texts were easy to read aloud and easy to memorize. For example, students first started studying Chinese by learning by rote and reciting. *The Tri-metrical Classic* contains over 2,000 most frequently used words and rhyming sentences that are three syllables (words) in length. The 600 or so three-syllable constructions contain almost all the basic sentence patterns and morpheme combinations. In addition, this *Classic* expressed deep philosophic truths and some of the basic beliefs of Confucianism. Indeed it was a gem of literature and a model piece of exemplary writing. Aside from memorizing texts and reciting, students also made couplets as a practical exercise to test their mastery of sentence construction, tone, meaning and logic, as well as word order and the use of auxiliary words — two ways by which the Chinese language expresses grammatical and semantic relations, as well as mood and attitude. The teaching and learning of classical Chinese really was teaching and learning the written form of the language.

We can easily imagine how the experience of learning Chinese influenced both teachers and students of foreign languages, particularly English. Rote learning, recitation, reading and writing were stressed, and oral skills were usually overlooked. Learning a foreign language became equated with learning words and acquiring knowledge of their use, and not with developing skills or habits of correct use. There is hardly any awareness of the importance of knowing the functions of words and various constructions or the need to provide students with systematic training in this area through 'interactive' exercises in practical situations. So Intensive Reading and the methods used in its

teaching have persisted even during the open door period and it has been difficult to convince teachers of the need for change.

The Time Problem

Most teachers spend many hours each week meeting with their colleagues to decide on common materials and methods, uniform explanation of content, points of grammar, usage and meanings of words. They also spend one afternoon a week on political studies, the purpose of which is to ensure that everyone understands and supports the Party line, both in theory and in practice. Teachers also are expected to spend time every week studying the works of Chairman Mao, Lenin and other Party leaders, and reading the editorials and leading articles in the *People's Daily*. In addition, much time is spent in doing the household chores of daily living in a Third World economy. For example, shopping at the markets is very time consuming. To make sure of family buying, a teacher often has to get up very early to line up for one or two hours at particular market stalls. Washing clothes by hand also takes a lot of time and only a few can afford washing machines. Baths are usually taken at bath houses. Cooking, often by a coal fire, taking care of the young and old in very crowded quarters where often three generations are housed, are all very time consuming. In addition, travelling to and from work places in big cities can also be very tiring and time consuming. For example, in Shanghai, it takes 2 hours to travel by crowded bus from the Bubbling Well (Jing An) District, which is near the city centre, to Fudan University, which is in a suburb. It is not surprising that a teacher often feels tired and not very keen on adopting new and untried methods of teaching when he arrives.

Difficulties and Constraints

If a teacher really decides to try new materials and methods in spite of everything, he is faced with the difficulties of getting approval from some administrative head who wants to examine the material before printing or copying. If he finds some ideas he suspects to be out of line with Party policy, or if he feels the opinions of some respected senior teacher or Party cadre should be sought, it will take some time before the approval process can be completed, especially in times of ideological conflict. Finally

after approval has been obtained, the teacher is faced with the difficulty of getting copies of the material made. There is a lack of copying machines, and the expense may be prohibitive and he may have to have someone to type the stencils for him. Then the stencils have to wait to be mimeographed. There may be more time wasted, and he may also have to apply for funds.

Most teachers prefer using materials and methods that have been used before and have been proved politically safe through use over a period of time. Such materials are usually easy to teach because they are supported by exercises, keys or answers and teaching plans and lecture notes which have gone through discussion and have group approval. These materials are usually less controversial academically too and have the approval of senior teachers whose 'face' must be respected — a very important condition in China, where respect for one's elders has a history of thousands of years.

Conservatism in China

Foreigners often do not understand why China is so conservative and why it changes so slowly. In the West, initiative, creativity, originality and enterprise are rewarded. Opportunities exist in abundance. China is a country where population pressure, lack of resources and natural calamities have worked to convince the people of the necessity for central authority, collective action on a wide scale and prudence and circumspection in times of stress. This experience and the experience of thousands of years resulted first in the emergence of Confucianism and then in the reinforcement and consolidation of conservatism with Confucianism providing the philosophy. The importance of the family, the group, and the nation and its leaders over and above the importance of the individual should be seen in the light of China's history. These beliefs have helped to increase stability and social and economic security in the nation, but they do not encourage change and improvement which have to originate from the imagination and creativity of the individual.

The Student

The importance of student motivation, attitudes, beliefs and study habits in affecting the learning process is generally recognized, and English language teachers in China have always devoted

much attention to questions in this area.

Chinese students are generally known all over the world as being highly motivated, hardworking, intelligent, and methodical. They generally get high marks in tests, often achieve distinction academically and have won general respect for their ability to do well in their studies. This has been attributed to many cultural and economic factors such as the traditional, overriding motivating force to bring honour to their ancestors and to provide economic security for their families by achieving future success in their careers for which education is the essential preparatory step. China's long history of recruiting civil servants by the Imperial Examination System, and the literature have reinforced this tradition. Furthermore, the honour, power and economic benefits which go with public office, especially high public office, have impressed upon the people the importance of education.

However, in China after 1950, those who are not acquainted with the real situation are mystified by the behaviour of many students. For example, we would expect the best and most highly motivated students to be found in the prestigious 'key' universities, yet this is not always true; students may not want to go to these universities, (even if tuition is free!) because after graduation, they are assigned to positions all over the country, including remote, undeveloped and poor mountain areas. Instead, most students from the big cities prefer to go to the less prestigious municipal colleges from where they are assigned jobs locally. The attraction of the big cities lies not only in the higher standards of living, the educational and cultural opportunities, and convenience and comfort to be found there, but also in the higher quality of the city-cadre-administrators, who are usually more enlightened, more intelligent and better educated.

Assignment of work is a particularly sensitive question, where English majors are concerned, because their work puts them in contact with native speakers, that is, people from the capitalist West, so political considerations by the Party's personnel officer are dominant factors. Bright students from families with foreign connections are considered bad security risks and hence are seldom assigned jobs in foreign trade and foreign affairs sections. Students in key universities may often lack motivation and do not study well, especially when hard-left liners dominate Party policy and when students believe that their legitimate personal or family interests will not be considered or they will be treated as pawns in a power game, to be sacrificed for political goals of some clique

under the name of patriotism, or treated as a number to be juggled around according to some state plan which he doesn't understand.

During the period of reform (1976–1989) when regulations governing promotion and advancement stipulated mastery of English or another foreign language as a condition for promotion, motivation to study English was very high all over the country. This was especially so, because, under the liberal 'open door' policies of this period, knowledge of English enabled individuals to acquire the latest technology, to do profitable business with foreign businessmen and to take advantage of academic, scientific and cultural exchange programmes and to go abroad for further study. Students were no longer satisfied with a reading knowledge of English but wanted to acquire all four skills.

So strong was the demand and the wish to study English that state universities, colleges, and foreign language institutes were no longer able to provide sufficient places for people to study English. The establishment of many private schools and colleges filled this need soon after 1978. Thousands of students flocked to these schools even though in many cases the price of tuition was high. The attraction also lay in the fact that students were not bound by rules and obligations which made it difficult for them to leave school when they wanted to go abroad to study or to emigrate, nor were they forced to accept government assignment of jobs upon the completion of their courses. The strong motivation of the students in these private schools stands in sharp contrast to the lack of interest and motivation among students in state universities and colleges; it is shown not only by their attitude towards their studies, but also by the fact that they pay very high fees, sometimes equal to one half of their monthly salary for one term of classes. There was rapid growth in enrolment; for example, in Shanghai, enrolment in the English courses in the private Qian Jin College of Continuing Education rose from 100 students to over 10,000 in 5 years. The strong motivation and enthusiasm to study English is also shown by the rapid growth of sales of textbooks (mostly cheap pirated editions), popular interest and enrolment in courses by radio and television stations, and in the growing numbers of listeners to Voice of America's *English 900* programme with corresponding rise in sales of *English 900* textbooks. In fact, in the period of reform from 1976 to 1989, studying English was the prestigious thing to do for children of the higher cadres, intellectuals, famous scientists, scholars,

engineers, doctors and the well-to-do.

We would not expect very many difficulties in teaching these highly motivated, intelligent and hardworking students, yet, in fact, Chinese students of English experience many more difficulties than, say, an English student of French would and these difficulties are often due to his study habits beliefs and attitudes.

Due to his learning of written Chinese which is based on the ideograph, and the usual remembrance of the forms of the word plus the order in which the strokes of the different characters are written, the Chinese student tends to learn English words, also by remembering the form of the word and the sequence of the letters of the word and not by remembering the sound and the relation between the sound and the alphabet.

The Chinese student often learns English in the same way as he learns written Chinese, by first learning the meaning and spelling of the new words of every lesson, usually divorced from the context in which the words are used. This means that what he has really learned is the Chinese translation of the English word, and he often believes that that is the only meaning of the English word. He pays little attention to its part of speech, to its function, or to the way it is used with other words in a sentence. Still less does he notice the situation in which it is used. This results in difficulties in reading comprehension as well as in speaking and writing, and is the cause of much pidgin English.

The weaker student often learns the new words silently, not paying attention to the way words should be properly pronounced, nor to the stress in multisyllable words, resulting in wrong internal sound images. He pays almost no attention to the way the words sound in the stream of speech, no attention to rhythm, logical stress, sentence stress, intonation or to sense groups. He thus inadvertently creates great difficulties for himself in listening comprehension, because his internal phonetic image of English is so widely different from how it is naturally spoken.

For the Chinese student, learning the written form of his native tongue is memory based. Long hours are spent in rote learning, memorizing pages of text, especially when his respected teacher tells him how he benefits from learning classical texts which are 'model texts' or 'gems' of literature, and therefore much admired, and considered models for imitation of form, content, organization, and use of words. This method has proved to be effective in improving the student's written composition in Chinese. His speech has not been taught in schools but has been

learned from childhood in interaction with his mother and the people in his environment, so he thinks of learning English solely as a written language. He spends a lot of time memorizing pages of text instead of using English in communication and developing his skills. Since he has not paid sufficient attention to correct pronunciation and phonetics, memorizing actually tends to consolidate the wrong sound images of words, creating difficulties in his speech and listening comprehension.

The Chinese student believes that learning a foreign language really means learning knowledge about the language. He seldom realizes that his real job is acquiring skills in communication. He knows practice is important — that practice makes perfect — but he equates practice with chanting aloud what he has memorized, or reciting what he has written. Conversation classes, thus becomes recitation classes, not practice in real communication, and learning often becomes memorizing and recalling lecture notes and textbooks and reading practice becomes practice in non-meaningful grammatical analysis to show knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, instead of practice in understanding the main idea of what is read, or grasping the significance of important details.

Comprehension, whether through reading or listening, is slow and difficult, because the student often has to go through a process of word-by-word translation. Listening is even more difficult, as the student often has to connect the sound he has heard, with his different internal mental image of the sound of the word, which has meaning only as a Chinese equivalent which may not fit the context in which he hears the word. And since this internal mental sound image of the word has a falling tone because that is the way he usually learns the word and the way his teacher usually pronounces it when he reads the word list before he teaches the new lesson, and since tone in Chinese is one of the ways to distinguish words and their meanings, his difficulties in recognizing the word and getting the meaning from spoken English are compounded.

Chinese word order is very important and is incompatible with English word order. The student feels so strongly that Chinese word order is correct that he often writes English sentences in that order and he is unaware that he has not followed the rules of syntax and has forgotten the sentence patterns he has learned. For example, instead of saying: "It is difficult for me to learn this". He says: "I am very difficult to learn this". Chinese teachers of

English understand this difficulty and often use contrastive analysis to point out such mistakes, but they do not provide sufficient exercises to consolidate habits of correct use.

A Chinese student's preoccupation with knowledge of words and grammar often results in not developing reading skills for extracting information and meaning rapidly and efficiently. It also results in his knowing the meaning of words but not knowing how to use the words correctly in his speech and writing, still less knowing the occasions when he should use the words. Chairman Mao in his essay, *On Practice* criticized Chinese scholars for acquiring knowledge for knowledge's sake in order to show it off or to store it away for their own enjoyment or admiration, and not to apply it in useful service to the community or for revolutionary purposes. It seems that this is a common fault of Chinese intellectuals. Chinese students are often proud of the number of texts in English they have memorized. When they read they look carefully at each word in a text and examine the text to see if there is any grammatical phenomenon in it they do not know. The result is that they often miss the main idea, the author's purpose, or the significance of what they read. To use a Chinese expression, "they see the trees, but not the forest". When attention is given to meaning, reading becomes a painful process of word for word translation, and 'meaning' comes through only after translation. Since this 'meaning' is what is understood from the Chinese meaning of the words, often divorced from context and the cultural and historical background of the passage, understanding is partial. In some cases, even English names must be given a Chinese equivalent before the person seems real to the reader.

The student's experience in learning Chinese and his pre-occupation with knowledge makes him regard teaching methods not directly related to learning knowledge as a waste of time. His Chinese language teacher is usually very serious, austere and strict and commands great respect and demands good behaviour and a serious attitude towards study. A student who has gone through such a training often feels that role playing, language games and other similar 'new-fangled methods' used for oral exercises to increase language skills belong outside the classroom.

The Chinese student's traditional attitude towards his teacher is one of respect, obedience, and reliance; a reliance that is often dependence, and in cases of good teachers, the attitude is almost

one of worship and questions are avoided as they may imply that the teacher has not explained everything clearly and he may lose face. This attitude does not promote normal exchange of information between teacher and student, and there is no initiative from the student nor is there feedback in the cooperative effort necessary to raise efficiency in teaching and learning. Students do not participate fully or responsibly in the learning process and this lack of participation affects quick effective use of new materials and methods. In order to give regard to the teacher's face, students may give outward respect to the teacher's views but actually use different methods of study. Meanwhile the teacher takes for granted that he has the unquestioned obedience of the students. This outward respect also makes it difficult to develop student-directed learning to supplement the prevailing teacher-directed teaching style. Nor can there be real class discussion.

Lack of real responsible participation and involvement and self-initiated learning thus becomes an obstacle to the development of independence, creativity, self-reliance in studying and the development of the ability to criticize and evaluate one's own work objectively in the learning process. In brief, this attitude does not promote real, efficient and effective learning. The greater the prestige of the teacher, the more the student respects and worships him. This explains why foreign experts mention so often this aspect of the Chinese student's learning difficulties. Perhaps younger foreign teachers may be able to experience less difficulty in establishing a new and more democratic relationship with their students.

TEACHERS AND THE PARTY

In order to teach effectively, in order to introduce new materials and methods and particularly to improve the quality of ELT on a scale that involves more than a few individuals, the teacher must get real long-term support from English Department administrators and Party officials. There must be real mutual understanding and trust between them, yet in practice teachers, especially foreign teachers, are often mystified by the vague and non-committal answers to many questions which should have elicited straightforward responses.

Relations between English language teachers and Party

officials can be better understood by reviewing the historical background. The Party looks upon the English Department as an important organ of the state machinery, because this is the department that trains the eyes and ears through which the socialist state gets information about the outside world. It also trains the voice through which the socialist state informs the outside world about itself, creating an image and through which it persuades the outside world to deal with it on good terms. In short, contact with the outside world, especially the English speaking world, is to be made through cadres trained by the English Department.

At the same time, the English departments which the Party inherited after taking power in China are, in its eyes, politically most complex because they consist of teachers of all political inclinations, people with close contacts with Westerners, people with bourgeois ideas or ideas of other political, economic and philosophic systems than its own. Moreover, the graduates of such departments are also often assigned to politically sensitive ministries, bureaus or organizations where there is important contact and interaction with the West. Party officials feel responsible for the political reliability of the graduates of the English Department and so this has become a matter of great concern. This is the reason why the Party often stresses the importance of training foreign language cadres who are both 'red' and 'expert', 'red' referring to the quality of political reliability of a graduate who has been fully indoctrinated with the proper ideology of the Party, and tested through political movements. 'Expert' refers to mastery of English or other expertise with which to serve the state. Of course both are important, but the Party usually stresses the prime importance of 'red' because it fears students are prone to become 'white' in their preoccupation to be 'expert'.

From the early days after 'liberation', the Party has sent its ablest and most reliable cadres to staff the Party branch organization of the English departments. If possible, these cadres were those who knew the situation in the cities, which meant that they were members of the Party's underground in the days before liberation. The actual appointment is a complicated affair, because of the affiliations of such cadres with various Party leaders who may or may not have been involved in various power struggles in the Party during its sixty years of history.

Usually, the most politically 'reliable' cadres are those who

come from poor peasant families in the countryside, with no contacts with city people, intellectuals or the West. In addition they have been tested through long periods of struggle in war or in class struggle. Probably the most respected and considered most reliable are those who have gone through the Long March and much of Communist revolutionary history. However, these cadres usually do not understand English language teachers. These are two kinds of people who are worlds apart.

English language teachers usually come from families who are financially able to send their children to school to study. The better teachers who have higher proficiency in English are usually those who first went to the better Church mission-supported secondary schools and later, for example, graduated from St. John's University, the famous and prestigious Episcopal Church supported university in Shanghai. The families who are financially able to send their children to such schools are usually limited to families from the bourgeois, landlord or at least the rich peasant class. Very seldom do they come from the worker or peasant class, and if they do, they are usually those helped by some Church or charity organization, which immediately makes them suspected of having 'sold their proletarian souls' to the Church and of becoming foreign 'running dogs' or agents. In short, the very fact that these teachers studied English in their youth and learned English well enough to be teachers makes them suspect. Party cadres feel sure that English teachers have been influenced by Western thought and contact, hence they are politically unreliable. This explains the undercurrent of tension between the non-Party teachers and the Party cadres and officials. This is also the basic cause of misunderstanding and mistrust between them.

Under the more liberal policies during the period of reform from 1976 to 1989 the tension lessened when younger Party cadres with a college education and a better understanding of the world outside were appointed to responsible Party posts in the English departments. However, even in this period there were two movements which show that there is still suspicion of the Western influence on intellectuals. One is the 'Movement against Spiritual and Mental Pollution' and the other is the 'Movement against Bourgeois Liberalism'.

To the English teacher, the secretary of the Party branch of the English Department is the official who has the power to grant or refuse approval for his requests and who has the authority and knowledge to give answers to his questions. Actually, the Party

secretary is in a very difficult position. On the one hand, he wants support from the teaching staff to carry out Party policies, and he wants to get good work out of them. If possible, he would like to see results which he can report as achievements. In order to get this support he must be seen as a man who is acting in the interests of the teaching staff and supporting them. On the other hand, he has to report to the Party Committee higher up the hierarchy, act and speak in accordance with the Party policies and not let situations develop contrary to these policies, nor let reports critical of the Party come out. He has the difficult and thankless job of resolving conflicts of interests between the teaching staff below and the policies, orders, instructions and expectations from above, or face criticism or disciplinary action if he fails.

The method used to achieve understanding of the Party policies or instructions is the method of discussion in 'political study' meetings during which the position and expectations of the higher Party officials are explained and attempts are made to get the teaching staff to accept and support them. This is followed by discussion on what should be done, as well as to gather reactions, suggestions or opinions on how the new policies might affect the work of the department, cause difficulties or create opportunities. The system of political study helps the Party secretary to understand the problems he faces, and is a form of political democracy giving the ordinary person a chance to express his views. In normal times, when authority is in the hands of liberal secretaries, it is also a channel for two-way communication between the Party leaders at the top and the people below, because such discussions are reported to higher Party cadres.

Through the system of political study the Party attempts to achieve unity of will and direction in carrying out modernization according to the principles and policies laid down by the Central Committee. It is a way of coordinating the efforts of over one billion Chinese to overcome economic backwardness and achieve a better life, while not losing the sacred beliefs and ideals of the Party.

Although the system of political study helps the department Party secretary in doing his work, his work is not easy. He has great, often ill-defined responsibilities to see that nothing goes wrong in his department, but he has very little power. Real power lies in the University's Party Committee, with the Committee's Secretary as its chief representative. Others who have power are

the Executive Vice-President of the University, who often is also the Vice or Assistant Secretary of the University Party Committee and who handles the day to day affairs of the University, and the Party committee member in charge of organization and personnel, who handles personnel matters, such as appointments, salaries and rewards. Responsibility for financial matters is in the hands of the university bursar, who is a member of the University Party Committee and who controls the expenditure of funds according to the budget, but who is also independent of the University Party committee because he reports directly to the country's Finance Ministry or Treasury Department, and has the responsibility to see that all financial matters are handled according to the policies of this body. The Department Party Secretary and the Head of the Department share responsibility for departmental financial matters, such as budgets and approval of expenses according to the budget. Since budgets are made on a yearly basis and have to be approved by various officials step by step up the bureaucratic hierarchy, any programme requiring money has to go into the budget well in advance of the time it is actually needed. This creates great difficulties if any teacher needs money for any new programme not provided for. The difficulties are compounded because of a ruling by the Finance Ministry that all funds not used in the fiscal year for which they were intended, have to be handed back to the national treasury. If the programme lasts longer than a year, a budget for each has to be submitted and approved separately. Under these conditions, changes and additions to a budget after approval are almost impossible.

In view of the Department Party Secretary's position and limited powers, his duty is primarily to transmit to the teachers, students and staff the instructions from the Party officials, and to do his best to persuade them to support and act. At the same time, it is also his duty to be informed about what is happening in his department, in the classrooms, in the dormitories, and in the private lives of teachers, students, cadres, staff members and their immediate relatives and close friends. If he discovers something unusual, the matter is raised in political study meetings, and discussed so that a consensus is reached on the matter and everyone, if possible, knows what is the 'correct' view and what action is considered correct. The successful Department Party Secretary is one who can spot problems before they grow to unmanageable proportions and deal with them as early as possible. It is his job to give direction to the work of the

department according to Party policy.

Society in China is well-organized, and every family is registered with the police. Every home is part of a Party neighbourhood organization and every person has a file which includes all personal documents, particulars of his life and thoughts, records of his education and work, crime record if any, and records of all people with whom he has close contacts. With the support of the police, the Party organization and the personnel office, as well as aided by the cadres working for him in his department, it may seem that the Party Secretary would have an easy time keeping everything under control. Yet, in practice it is really difficult, especially during the period of reform when so many new ideas and new problems came up. In the past, the criteria for what should be done or not done was clear to everyone. Now, more and more, it has become apparent that there are wide differences in views within the Party leadership, so that an individual Department Party Secretary, in order to play safe and not offend anyone, is often forced to ask his superiors for instructions and not to make decisions on his own.

To maintain stability and order at this time when so much is changing, the Party under Deng affirmed that the nation must always hold on to four basic principles: *Marxism, Leninism and Mao Ze-dong Thought; the path of Socialism; the leadership of the Communist Party; and the dictatorship of the proletariat*. These four principles will never change. In the field of education and foreign language teaching the Party affirmed that the basic aims of its policy were, as in the past, to educate the student to make progress and to become a better person: politically and morally (the 'red' component); intellectually (the 'expert' component); physically (so that the student is healthy and able to perform adequately in his work and able to join in some athletic sport); and aesthetically (so that the student has a sense of beauty, can appreciate the arts, can act with consideration and good manners socially, and have a sense of responsibility in keeping the environment including his home and work place beautiful, as well as keeping himself clean and presentable). This fourth aim brings education into the programme to build a modern 'culture of the socialist spirit'.

With the above principles, policies and aims clearly in mind, the Department Party Secretary has the responsibility to see that all teachers, particularly Party members, examine carefully all syllabuses, teaching plans, teaching methods and materials. He

must see to it that the teaching materials do not contain matter that puts the Chinese Communist Party, Socialist China, the National Government and its present policies in a bad light. Such content must never appear. Content which criticizes or appears to criticize communism, even in a general or indirect way, should be carefully censored. Usually the material is requested to be withdrawn and replaced.

Ideally, all content should promote the ideology, aims and policies of the Chinese Communist Party. The dominating principle here is 'art and education should serve politics'. If policy based on this principle becomes too restrictive and keeps out material which is useful for modernization or for developing the student intellectually and aesthetically, then according to present practice, the material should be changed so that it is politically neutral or non-political. It should certainly not be critical of, or go against the policies, the four basic principles or the political thinking of the Chinese Communist Party. The four principles are regarded as the fundamental beliefs upon which the PRC is founded and should be regarded like a Western constitution.

How these principles are actually interpreted and applied in practice depends on the political climate, but as younger, better educated and better informed Party members are appointed to the post of English Department Party Secretary, it is hoped that decisions in this area will be increasingly more rational. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. For example a university teacher was once criticized during the Anti-rightist Movement for analyzing the following sentence according to 'imperialist' grammar and was condemned for not following the Party policy of learning from the Soviet Union. In analyzing the sentence: 'The book is *on the table*.' The teacher had said that *on the table* was an adverbial modifier of place whereas the cadre who criticized him said that this should be analyzed according to Soviet grammar books as a 'predicative' after the linking verb 'is', just as in 'John is a student' or 'John is intelligent', the words 'a student' or 'intelligent' should be analyzed as a 'predicative'. To support this view, the following example was offered: 'John is *from Shanghai*' meaning 'John is a *Shanghai*lander' in which both *from Shanghai* and *Shanghai*lander are predicatives. After many years when the political climate had changed, and the slogan had changed to "Learn from the advanced experience of all nations", this cadre himself was criticized at a department meeting and had to make an apology. The new Party Secretary said that this was

an example of using political reasons incorrectly to criticize something that was essentially an academic matter, and that such practices were not good for progress in ELT. He said that teachers should be given the greatest possible freedom in academic matters according to Chairman Mao's thought expressed in his famous saying, "Let the hundred schools of thought contend."

When academic questions come up or when proposals or objections are made, the top department Party officials or administrators seldom voice an early opinion, but urge more discussion so that proposals or ideas can be made more acceptable and workable, with regard to the constraints and difficulties and with special attention to efficiency and effectiveness, so that all the related questions as to policy and principle as well as costs in time, energy, effort, personnel and finance are clear, and a consensus is reached. The answer one gets from a cadre is often: 'Let's study the problem' (*yen jiu*) or 'Let's discuss the problem' (*tao lun xie shang*). Meanwhile discussion will proceed slowly, while the wheels of the Party bureaucracy revolve, before consensus and a decision is reached. If a consensus is not reached, a proposal, project or plan may be shelved for a time or until the question comes up again.

There are historical reasons for these procedures besides Deng's pragmatism. Before and during the Cultural Revolution, Party officials and administrators, often Party members, have on many occasions shown themselves to be domineering, arbitrary and dictatorial. They have given orders and guidance blindly (*xia zhi hui*) without understanding what they are doing, something severely condemned by Deng. In addition, since the early days of the revolution and guerrilla warfare, the Party under Chairman Mao has held to the 'mass line' as its ideal and basic policy, which requires all Party members and cadres to get close to the masses of the people, to understand them, get their opinion, inform them about Party policies and programmes, get their active support and involvement, and work with and through them. This basic policy is reflected in the slogan, "Go the way of the mass line!", "Learn from the masses, do propaganda work among the masses, arouse the masses, and organize the masses!" a policy which has been stressed since early revolutionary days under Mao's leadership. It is also reflected by the questions often asked by Party cadres when any issue comes up, whether or not they are academic issues of methodology or teaching materials. For example, they would ask:

- How would the masses (ordinary teachers and students) react?
- Will the initiative and interest of the masses be actively aroused? Can they be aroused?
- To what degree will the masses be involved, or have been involved? (Party cadres believe that the greater the degree in which the masses are involved, the greater the chances of success.)
- To what degree does the new proposal represent the interests and welfare of the masses?
- To what degree will the masses support the new proposal?

With a new proposal all the above questions are asked and an attempt is made to achieve consensus. So, for example, when a new methodology using new teaching materials is proposed, cadres would discretely study the opinions and reactions of teachers and students, the demands on their time and effort, and the effects and results in view of the limitations of the teachers, particularly their level of proficiency in English. These cadres are now beginning to be aware that many teachers lack training in applied linguistics.

Other constraints or questions are also looked at and treated seriously — costs, availability of equipment, interpersonal and intergroup (teaching groups) relationships. As most Party officials neither have the education nor the expertise of the teachers involved, nor the power to decide, they tend to be cautious, careful and non-committal in giving answers to questions of an academic nature or questions aimed at getting support for some new proposal, especially if the proposal involves some new methodology using new teaching materials.

Even when a consensus is reached, the response to a proposal for the adoption of a new methodology would be to suggest (really a decision) to try it out on a small scale by the active supporters, who would be asked to report periodically to the department. Usually a special 'three-in-one committee' is formed. This committee consists of the responsible teacher in charge, a Party cadre — often a political instructor of the students — and a student representative who is carefully chosen for qualities of leadership, integrity and an above-average language proficiency. The teacher is often the chairman of the committee. This committee becomes the agent to monitor the experiment, to solve the problems that arise, to keep all the people concerned informed and to get support.

The whole process takes time and seems to go against the desire to modernize quickly, but given the role of the Party to guarantee the successful implementation of policy, this process is the logical outcome of a desire to avoid taking unnecessary risks and to get sure, positive and successful results even at the expense of some speed.

Naturally, in such an environment both foreign and Chinese teachers who want quicker action, change and progress would feel frustrated. Historically, this kind of frustration has existed for thousands of years. In the past, officials and scholars, in the hierarchy of the government of the emperors, who were seeking stability and security, and protecting vested interests and the sanctity of Confucianism, had been the voice of conservatism, had advised caution and had been powerful factors against change and rapid progress. This was and is the kind of environment in which the phenomenal patience of the Chinese people has grown and developed.

However, although we see many factors in China under Communist administration which work to slow down progress, yet a Communist cadre would be the first to point out periods of revolution and change when rapid progress had been made. He would say that this wave like progress with periods of rapid progress followed by periods of waiting and even retrogression is inherent in the dialectical process of change and is universal. He would point to periods of boom and bust, prosperity and depression in the Western capitalist world. He would say it is inevitable that there should be periods of quantitative change (*liang bian*) when forces are gathering strength and preparing for change and periods of qualitative change (*zhi bian*) when we see big change, dramatic change or revolutionary change.

Rhetoric aside, the kind of changes which we have seen most of the time in the past 40 years in China has been motivated more by political considerations and inspired, initiated and directed by party cadres than other factors. It was in the last period that we see a greater participation by the teachers themselves out of a desire to see real improvement in the quality of ELT in terms of academic effectiveness. This was due largely to the pragmatism of Deng who was interested in 'cats' who could 'catch mice'. Politics was again a factor but this time, politics was behind effectiveness and efficiency, supporting it instead of counteracting it with other political-considerations. So, for once, we see unity of purpose from the highest political circles, the policy makers, to the party

secretaries, administrators and cadres in charge of the practical day to day work of the universities and departments down to the teachers and students on the 'front lines of the battle for modernization'. Many of the difficulties still existed, such as the problems of daily living, incompetence, bureaucraticism, barriers between intellectuals and some party cadres, etc. but difficulties began to melt away or were overcome more easily, as the political cadre worked with the teachers to increase efficiency and get results. Good political cadres and administrators even looked upon themselves as 'servants of the people' and really worked hard and acted with responsibility to get things done properly, while some of the better ones improved their methods of management and used a variety of more effective ways to encourage and inspire action and creative work. They helped to clarify objectives and specify qualitative and quantitative criteria for better control and direction to get things moving in the right direction.

The result is there for all to see: the achievements made from 1978 to 1987. Although some of the objectives were difficult to reach, for example the adoption on a wider scale the more modern and more sophisticated methods found to be more effective in ELT, at least the problems involved were made clearer to all concerned so that preparation for future action could be made. During this period a lot of real hard work was done. Under Third World economy conditions, this must have entailed much strenuous effort and personal sacrifice. That this effort was actually made was the miracle.

XANADU — 'A Miracle of Rare Device': the Teaching of English in China

Alan Maley

It is often said that those who visit China for a week write a book about it. Those who stay a month write an article. And those who live here a year or more — write nothing. I cannot claim the status of a China expert, having lived here for only a year and a half, yet I have the temerity to write at least an article because my work here involves me at many levels of the complex English teaching scene, because I feel it is worth the effort to try to clarify some of the issues and problems which attend the teaching of English in China, and because I shall confine myself to the impact of foreign teachers in China.

It should be said at the outset that any statement made on the subject must be open to modification or refutation because China is enormous, and it is far from being the monolith it appears from outside. Apart from geographical variation, there is a diversity of opinion and attitude at the human level which has to be experienced to be believed. This article then is an attempt to find a handhold on the slippery slopes of the mountain that is China.

In doing so, I shall be critical since there is little point in making purely cosmetic remarks, the sole intention of which is to please. My basic stance is one of a friend, and true friendship can surely withstand the expression of frank opinion. I wish then, initially, to examine a number of problems which, it seems to me, impair the efficiency of foreign teachers within TEFL in China.

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Semantic Problems

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less".

And that is the first problem, since I seem to note that there are a number of key words which are interpreted differently by Chinese host and foreign guest. It is not possible to give an exhaustive list of such words of expression, but these appear to be among the more important:

- (a) *Teacher training.* Most Chinese host institutions take this to mean language improvement for their teachers. No notion of methodological improvement enters into their calculations. If their teachers "know" more English, they will teach better. This, for them, is axiomatic.

Most foreign teachers who are told they are to do teacher training tend to view the term in a different light. Better command of the target language by the teacher is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. Teacher training, for them, includes an important element of methodology, classroom observation, materials trial and development, and so on. These are two very different, if not irreconcilable, views of the same term.

- (b) *Literature.* This also tends to have different connotations for different people. The teaching of English literature at most Chinese universities is set in the mould of the survey course, which gives an overview of who wrote what, when and whether it is any good or not. Along with this usually goes the study of short extracts from approved authors. By contrast, the view of most foreign teachers is that the teaching of literature involves equipping the student with the tools to deal with any text; with developing critical judgement. One approach looks at the product, the other at the process.
- (c) *ESP.* English for Special (or latterly, for Specific) Purposes is clearly one of the keys to TEFL in China. One of the main reasons for learning English is to secure access to the scientific and technical expertise available through it. Yet the understanding of the term is not at all uniform. On the one side, the view prevails of ESP as an agglomeration of specialist vocabulary to be internalized; on the other, that it

consists in characteristic ways of organizing thought and language for a given purpose. According to one's view of ESP, the approach to it through materials and methodology will be widely different.

- (d) *Book.* For many Chinese students and teachers books are thought of as an embodiment of knowledge, wisdom and truth. Knowledge is "in" the book and can be taken out and put inside the students' heads. Hence the reverence with which books are treated, the value they are assigned, and the wish to learn by heart what they contain.

For many, if not all, foreigners, books may contain facts, opinions and ideas. The facts are open to interpretation, the opinions to dispute and the ideas to discussion. There is nothing sacred about books, which are regarded as tools for learning — not the goal of learning.

- (e) *Reading.* The Chinese attitude towards books is reflected in the approach to teaching reading in English. Most foreign teachers encounter the course entitled "Intensive Reading" with some surprise. It consists in taking students through a text on a word by word, phrase by phrase basis, explaining points of vocabulary, syntax, style and content along the way — rather like the *explication de texte* in the classic French tradition. The text is used as a pretext for intensive, but *ad hoc*, examination of the language it contains.

The foreign teacher tends to find this obsessive concern with the fine detail of his language somewhat irritating since, for him, reading is something else; namely, it is teaching students to extract meaning and information from texts as rapidly and efficiently as possible, and to apply it to their current concern. This process is not, in their view, served by squeezing each text dry, since intensive reading concentrates attention on a necessarily small number of texts, rather than equipping the student with tools to deal with a wide range of texts (or indeed with any text).

- (f) *Test.* The misunderstandings which arise from the use of this word are not confined to China, of course. However, even taking account of overgeneralization, it does appear that, to the Chinese, a test is something a student passes or fails. And he does so because a pass mark in the form of a percentage

has been fixed, often in a quite arbitrary fashion. There seems to be little appreciation of the fact that any score is open to interpretation, that is, that it is not an absolute. Nor is it acknowledged that there are different types of tests for different purposes, or that there are some kinds of courses which cannot be tested at all.

To the foreign teacher with even a nodding acquaintance with the theory and practice of testing, such a view is very difficult to accept. Increasingly tests are being used to diagnose the learners' language profile and assess his progress. This move away from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced testing is much more interested in what the learner can do than in what he cannot do, and it attempts to assign relative rather than absolute values to the results.

It would be possible to go on adding to this list of words which, owing to their differing interpretations, cause misunderstandings, and even conflict, between Chinese teaching institutions and their foreign guest teachers. But it is time to pass to other types of problems.

Views of the Learning Process and the Study Habits of Chinese Students

It must be clear from the above that Chinese student and foreign teacher rarely share the same views on the nature of the teaching process. Even now the most widely accepted view of learning in China is that it is memory-based. The teacher, or the textbook, has the knowledge. In order to acquire it, it is sufficient for the student to commit it to memory. This inevitably condemns both teachers and students to the use of non-meaningful approaches, in which grammatical form (usually devoid of contextual meaning) takes precedence over meaningful communication.

There is likewise a heavy load of vocabulary learning (but without the range of contexts which would make it useful) and an attention to the finer points of grammar, which transforms the language being taught into a series of conundrums to be solved, rather than a vehicle for communication.

The foreign teacher is liable to regard this approach and these learning habits as misguided. His students will want to know the difference between gerunds, gerundives and participles, without being able to answer simple questions about themselves

and their lives. They will spend hours on the learning of abstruse vocabulary items and idioms which they will rarely be capable of using appropriately. And they will often regard the less directive teaching methods of the foreign teacher as a waste of time.

The foreign teacher will admire the assiduity of his students, both in and out of class. But given that so often these study habits lead to knowledge about the language as an object rather than competence in using it as a tool, he will be disappointed. His students demonstrate their ability to work hard at digging a hole. But all too often, it is dug in the wrong place.

Curriculum Planning and the Definition of Objectives

There seem to be very few courses with clearly defined objectives. Whenever questioned on the aims and objectives of a given course, the departmental head (or equivalent) is likely to answer in the vaguest of terms. "We want to upgrade the level of our teachers, improve the four skills, get some knowledge of modern English literature, improve oral English, prepare our students for study abroad, etc.". But such well-intentioned remarks are not usually accompanied by a corresponding system of minor objectives which can be mapped to a syllabus and find its realization in materials and teaching techniques. In most cases therefore the foreign teacher is simply left to find his own salvation without clear guidance as to what it is precisely that he is supposed to be aiming at. This often leads to a feeling on the part of the foreign teacher that, since no one else is able to tell him which way he should be going, there is no reason for him to exert himself either. He is, after all, usually paid to teach, not to do curriculum planning. If no one else can tell him what kinds of thing to teach, then clearly "anything goes".

Recruitment of Foreign Teachers

Just as there is little guidance on the objectives of the programmes which foreign teachers are asked to teach, so there is a corresponding lack of direction in the field of recruitment.

One needs perhaps first to make a distinction between various systems of recruitment of teachers for China. There are those recruited by external agencies (such as UCLA, Georgetown University, British Council, Australian Development Aid Bureau, etc.). Given that they recruit for specific and usually well-defined

projects, they will not be discussed here. Apart from these, the foreign teachers are usually recruited semi-officially (for example when a Chinese scholar returns from overseas and persuades his university to invite a teacher from the foreign university or through other kinds of personal invitation), or officially via the Foreign Experts Bureau (with the assistance of Chinese Embassies abroad).

Secondly, it is necessary to distinguish between the category Foreign Expert (directly recruited by the Foreign Experts Bureau and with return fares paid, agreed salary and perquisites) and the category Foreign Teacher (often the sort of person recruited through connections of some kind, who pays his own fare and does not get the same salary or privileges as a Foreign Expert). There is also latterly, the category of "volunteer", usually recruited by the UN, VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), or VIA (Volunteers in Asia), who gets a rock-bottom allowance and few if any privileges.

As far as the informally recruited group of teachers is concerned, it often seems that the sole criterion for employment is: "If it walks, and talks English, it's OK". In other words, provided the person has some sort of university qualification (in no matter what subject) and is a native speaker of English, then he is acceptable. No qualification or experience in the teaching of English as a foreign (or second) language is required.

The Foreign Experts Bureau, ostensibly at any rate, insists on the highest qualifications, and its pay scale varies accordingly. On closer examination, however, its criteria are not so very different: "If it walks, and talks English, and has an MA or PhD, it's OK" (The Foreign Experts Bureau has on several occasions stated its preference for retired high-school or university teachers in any subject).

The recruitment scene then is beset by many paradoxes and inconsistencies. One comes across the result in terms of human wastage all over China . . .

- with the "see China and die" brigade, who are here for the experience, and are neither qualified for, nor capable of, doing an honest job of teaching.
- with teachers of history or whatever, possessing PhDs or MAs, completely at sea, trying to come to terms with teaching their own language for the first time.

- with well-qualified TESL professionals often working well below their capacity on language improvement courses which could clearly be done by less well-qualified teachers.

Again one could prolong the list, and draw up the list of exceptions. However, the observations I have been able to make are largely subsumed under the above categories.

My, no doubt highly personal, view is that, if "friends" are preferred to "experts", if academic title is preferred to proven field experience, if the role of the foreign teacher is not thought through, and if programme objectives are not properly planned, then the result is waste — waste of state money on salaries for teachers who take half a year to find out what their job is and how to do it, waste of student energy on teachers who do not deserve the effort, waste of expertise being underused, and waste of goodwill between the teacher, the learner and the institution.

Lack of Information

With reference to curriculum planning and the definition of objectives, it is clear that few foreign teachers coming to China have any clear indication of exactly what it is they are expected to do. From their personal point of view, however, it is perhaps even more disturbing to discover that they do not even know exactly what their terms of employment are. No teacher is given a contract until, at the earliest, two months after his arrival. His salary is fixed provisionally for the first two months, after which it is supposed to be revised in the light of his performance. China must be unique in this respect. Moreover, in spite of stipulations that contracts will be negotiated, what more often happens is that the foreign teacher is presented with a document which he is expected to sign without further ado. And some teachers never succeed in obtaining a contract at all. This introduces an element of insecurity into the employer/employee relationship, which is far from healthy, and which in almost all cases builds up to conflict before the contractual period is up.

Bureaucracy

The following phrases, and others like them, will have a familiar ring

"We are discussing the matter."

"It is not convenient."

"It will take a little time to decide."

"We need to discuss with leadership."

The foreign teacher cannot understand why even apparently innocuous and minor requests cannot be agreed to immediately, and he finds it even more frustrating to be fobbed off with temporizing responses. On the other hand, he often fails to realize quite how complicated decision-making is in China, where many things are decided by an elaborate process of consensus. Nor perhaps does he realize that the responses he gets are a reflection of the embarrassment his host experiences at having to refuse a request, rather than the outright untruths he takes them to be.

The sad thing is that decisions are often taken by those least qualified to do so, and this is nowhere more true than in decisions touching upon professional matters. Furthermore, the foreign teacher is rarely, if ever, consulted while decisions which concern him or her, personally or professionally, are being made.

Isolation

Many foreign teachers feel cut off and alone. Clearly both geography and language account in part for this. It is not easy to find oneself thousands of miles from home, in the middle of an alien culture, the language of which is in most cases totally unfamiliar. But they often feel alienated socially and psychologically too. Many arrive with high hopes of integrating fairly closely with their Chinese colleagues and students. They swiftly discover that the Chinese have a different view of their presence. They tend to be regarded as tools for improving the English of the students, to be taken out of the drawer in classtime, and put away again afterwards. They are normally housed separately from their students and colleagues, often in specially constructed foreign teachers' buildings, and they usually eat separately too. Most out of class contacts are carefully orchestrated. "Normal" person to person relationships on an individual level are frowned upon by the authorities.

A more charitable view would make the point that very few foreign teachers would survive Chinese living conditions, and that their hosts are making them as comfortable as they possibly can, often at great expense, so that they feel more at ease and can do a better job. The fact remains however that whether one regards

these special conditions as a way of inhabiting unwelcome contact between the foreigners and his colleagues and students or as an act of kindness towards the foreign teacher, the result is the same — isolation. He desperately wishes to be trusted and included, and he feels hurt that he is not.

Zenmeban?

It must be clear from the foregoing that large numbers of foreign teachers return from China with dampened enthusiasm, feelings of disappointment and in some cases bitterness and rancour. And I have little doubt that their Chinese hosts often privately feel that these foreigners are a weird lot and wonder if it is worth all the time, energy and money they expend on having them.

What could be done to improve matters? The problems fall into roughly three categories — pedagogical, recruitment/personnel, and bureaucratic/personal.

Pedagogical problems

It is a mistake for the foreign teacher to arrive thinking he has brought the good news in the form of his up-to-date methods and materials. Chinese study habits are deeply rooted and a frontal attack on them is pointless. There are ways, however, of turning these study habits to good use. For instance, by cashing in on the enormous amount of time students spend in private study. At present they most often engage in tasks which are unrewarding in learning terms, like committing the textbook to memory. But properly designed self-study materials for Chinese students would have an enormous pay-off. Another idea would be to assign more out-of-class group tasks, thus harnessing the strong group solidarity. In fact one is often driven to wonder whether too much classroom teaching is done at the expense of properly organized out-of-class learning.

However, it is equally a mistake for Chinese teachers and staff to dismiss foreign techniques and materials as irrelevant. There is an inconsistency in proclaiming the policy of the Four Modernizations, while at the same time claiming that China is so different that nothing foreign can possibly work there.

This brings me to my next suggestion, which is that if more foreign teachers were involved in well-defined projects with counterpart training of Chinese staff, many of the pedagogical

problems would be dealt with. One such project could involve the development of teaching materials by both Chinese and foreign teachers. This cooperation would be an excellent way to break down barriers, reduce the isolation mentioned above and come to a better mutual understanding of how to deal with the pedagogical problems.

Further, if the pedagogical objectives were better defined by the Chinese host institutions, and if professional decisions were made by those professionally qualified to do so, some of the pedagogical problems would begin to disappear. There are after all increasing numbers of young Chinese University teachers who have qualified in applied linguistics and methodology in the United States and the United Kingdom. Unhappily, they are often considered too "junior" to use their newly acquired skills and knowledge when they return to their institutions.

Recruitment and personnel problems

If pedagogical objectives were better defined it would be possible to identify the kinds of teacher needed to achieve them.

If there were more detailed and more accurate information available to teachers before they come to China, many of the subsequent misunderstandings would never arise.

Part of this would involve bringing Chinese practice on the drawing up and issuing of contracts into line with the rest of the world. This would also save all the drawn out and often bitter wrangling which so often goes on at present.

Personal and bureaucratic problems

It would help if both Chinese and foreign teachers had slightly lower expectations. The foreign teacher is rarely likely to be the paragon of virtue, industry, brilliance and omniscience expected by his employers. Foreign teachers, for their part, should not expect within weeks to become the soul mates of students and colleagues or be acclaimed as bringers of pedagogical manna in the wilderness.

Each culture has its own time scale. In the West we tend to expect things to happen in a hurry. In China the normally expected time interval is often longer. There has to be adjustment — on both sides. Foreign teachers have to realize that, for whatever reason, things may take longer than they do back home. But there is also a need for a realization on the part of their hosts that the Chinese time scale may not always be appropriate if the

aim is an effective programme of modernization.

There are I think hopeful signs on this front. Those teachers who stay on for a second year usually find that many difficulties simply evaporate. Is this because they no longer notice? Is it because they and their employers have effected a mutual *modus vivendi*? Or is it because they have proved themselves and are now accepted? Probably a bit of all three. However, there is little doubt that two year contracts would be better than the one year or less which most teachers serve at present. A year is not enough for foreign teacher and Chinese institution to come to terms with each other.

Foreign teachers with a problem would do well to avoid confrontations, which most often have the effect of stiffening the resistance. Patient persistence pays best. And if the assistance of a well-disposed third party can be enlisted to act as go-between, it often helps.

On the Chinese side, it would help if there were more open dialogue and less secrecy. Foreigners expect to be consulted about things which affect their lives, and are understandably upset if they are suddenly presented with decisions in which they had no hand and with which they may profoundly disagree. So, on the one hand more patience — on the other more openness.

Experience should warn us not to expect too much. To return to Alice:

... the Queen said, "The rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday — but never jam *today*."

"It *must* come sometimes to 'jam today' ", Alice objected.

Dare we hope she was right?

Production of ELT Materials for Chinese Learners — Evolution or Revolution?

Li Guanyi

The purpose of this paper is to present the standpoint of the English Department at Shanghai International Studies University concerning the production of ELT materials for English majors who are doing their foundation-stage work in foreign language institutes, colleges and universities in China, and to expound the principles underlying *A New English Course*, a set of five coursebooks being produced in the department.

China has a relatively long history of English language teaching with fairly satisfactory results. Students of English have been, by and large, capable of using English as a tool. Large numbers of English textbooks have been produced by Chinese scholars, and some of them are still widely used. Moreover, China has an ELT tradition peculiar to her specific situation. However, in view of the rapid development in the study of applied linguistics and its application to ELT in many countries abroad in recent years, much remains to be done by Chinese teachers of English to catch up with the current trends. For example, the principles of communicative teaching have not been studied by many teachers and their application to practice will need experimentation in China. Quantities of up-to-date English coursebooks embodying principles of communicative teaching produced abroad have been

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introduced, but somehow, few of them meet the need of ELT in China. Under these circumstances, we feel an urgent need for ELT materials that suit the situation in China, that reflect some current views on ELT methodology and at the same time retain some of the strong points of the Chinese ELT tradition. It is with this view in mind that the ELT Materials Production Group of the English Department in Shanghai International Studies University began to undertake the task of preparing *A New English Course* for the foundation-stage English majors at tertiary-level educational institutions.

Tertiary ELT

Before going into the principles underlying *A New English Course*, it is necessary to examine the present ELT situation at the tertiary level in China. What sort of students are enrolled? What is expected of the English majors after they have completed four years of study in foreign language institutes, colleges and universities? What is meant by the foundation stage? What are the students expected to achieve at the end of the foundation stage? Only by clarifying these points unambiguously can we state our case convincingly.

Since 1979, educational institutions at the tertiary level in China have been enrolling students by national matriculation. Students who wish to major in English are no exception. At a rough estimate, English majors upon admission to these institutions have acquired a basic English vocabulary ranging from 1500 to 2000 words and a basic knowledge of English grammar with acceptable English pronunciation and intonation. On average, these students can read some simple English texts without too much difficulty, but they are quite weak in listening and speaking, and even weaker in writing. There are some students who have spent anywhere from three to six years in foreign language schools and are therefore well above the average. There are also some other students, particularly those from cities and towns in inland areas, who are not quite as well-prepared as those who attended secondary schools in large cities.

After four years of study, students of English are assigned to various posts that require a good working knowledge of English. Generally speaking, these graduates become secondary school, college and university English teachers, professional translators,

journalists using English as a medium of communication, foreign trade and diplomatic service personnel, and personnel dealing with international law. These jobs require different kinds of special training, of course; but the basic requirement in common for all of them is proficiency in English, which cannot be achieved unless a solid foundation is laid. And the acquisition of a solid foundation in English is the main task the students must undertake during their first two years (the length of time may vary slightly in different cases) in tertiary-level institutions. Hence it is of prime importance that the students be given a very rigorous English language training during those years, i.e., at the foundation stage.

The Foundation and a New English Course

A solid foundation, in our opinion comprises both linguistic competence and communicative competence. At the foundation stage, what we mean by linguistic competence is the spontaneous, flexible, and correct manipulation of the essentials of the language system; and we consider this to be the indispensable prerequisite for communicative competence.

Linguistic competence at the end of the foundation stage requires the following as its basis:

1. A basic English vocabulary of 6000 to 7000 words, of which 2000 to 2500 words, their derivatives and collocations are to be used productively.
2. A good grasp of the basics of English grammar.
3. Fairly good English pronunciation and intonation.
4. Fairly high degree of skill in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
5. An ability to translate simple texts from Chinese into English and vice versa.

In addition to a fairly high degree of linguistic competence, it is necessary for the students to develop a reasonable degree of communicative competence, which, in simple terms, consists of:

- A knowledge of the basic principles of appropriacy and an ability to apply such principles in actual communication.
- A knowledge of the basic strategies for using language to communicate effectively in real situations and an ability to use the strategies when occasions arise.

A New English Course is meant to help the students to lay a solid foundation in English. The general principles underlying the coursebooks are an overall consideration and rational estimation of the current ELT situation in China; due attention to the traditional ELT methodology and the current views on ELT methodology; and a careful study of the relationship between accuracy and fluency and that between linguistic competence and communicative competence; integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing and the use of translation exercises; and finally the student-centred orientation without neglecting the teacher's role as a facilitator.

Overall Situation

Teacher capacity

English teachers at the tertiary level are, on the whole, proficient in English, but many of them are unfamiliar with the current trends in ELT methodology. They are used to the traditional teaching methods and techniques. And perhaps it will take some time before most of them can adapt themselves to radical changes in teaching materials as well as in teaching methodology.

Student capacity

The students' level of English upon admission to tertiary level institutions has been described above. There is still the problem of the students' initiative. It seems that unless properly guided, the students tend to be more interested in acquiring knowledge about language than in practising the language in use.

Chinese as the first language environment

The students are studying English in an environment where Chinese is the first language and where English is a language reserved for contact with foreigners, yet the students have little opportunity for contact with native speakers of English. In other

words, there is little chance of learning and acquiring English naturally as in an English-speaking environment.

Influence of traditional ELT methodology

Various ELT methods and techniques have predominated in China at different times. The grammar-translation method, for example, has long been prevalent in China. Even today there are teachers who feel more inclined to give grammatical analyses of sentences and to do a lot of translation exercises than to try other methods. Soon after Liberation, ELT in China was carried on after the pattern of that in the Soviet Union. Much attention was given to sentence analysis and vocabulary work. In the 1960s, pattern drills were quite in vogue in China, and many first-year English teachers turned to this new technique, which proved to be quite effective for basic training in oral English. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Chinese teachers of English began to be aware of the development of the communicative approach in language teaching. But since the communicative approach may be interpreted in various ways and since there is not a definite way of communicative teaching, it is difficult to change over from the traditional ways to the new way. Therefore the traditional ways of teaching still prevail, even though there are attempts made at implementing communicative principles of language teaching in some places.

ELT Methodology

Certain elements in China's traditional ELT methodology have been useful and effective, and so they should not be discarded altogether. For example, we find the pattern drill a useful means of familiarizing the students with grammatical structures, without a good grasp of which there would be no linguistic competence. So the pattern drill will be retained; but instead of drilling patterns for the sake of patterns, we think it necessary to relate patterns to meaning and use. In other words, language structure practice is to be given in contexts which involve some basic principles of appropriacy. Besides, vocabulary work and translation have contributed much to the students' language improvement. They ought still to be considered as essential points to be covered in our coursebooks.

However, the traditional ELT methodology overlooks an important aspect of language teaching — the teaching of the

communicative use of the language. So it is fitting that we should make our coursebooks partly communicatively orientated, so that they will help the students to acquire some degree of communicative competence during the foundation stage. For example, in the first three grammatical structure-based coursebooks, it is important to make both the language situations and the language materials as realistic as possible; and instances of artificiality and contrivance ought to be made as unobtrusive as possible. Throughout the coursebooks, such forms of classroom activities as role play, simulations and true-to-life interactions are to be used. In this way, the students will be provided with opportunities to practise communication in the classroom. Moreover the students' attention is to be called to appropriate language use. Basic listening, speaking, reading and writing skills will be taught so that the students will acquire some basic learning strategies.

Accuracy, Fluency and Linguistic and Communicative Competence

No English teacher will deny that both accuracy and fluency are essential in language learning. But what is the relationship between the two? Should either of them take precedence over the other? In our opinion, this question must be examined in relation to what is expected of the students when they graduate and to the condition under which the target language is taught. As stated above, our students are to be competent English language workers and they must have a solid foundation in English. A solid foundation, to us, is primarily, though by no means solely, accuracy. We believe that bad language habits once formed are difficult to eradicate afterwards. Moreover, for our students who are learning English in a Chinese-speaking environment, there is little chance of their learning acceptable English outside the classroom. In order to achieve accuracy, the students need a very rigorous training in the language system in the classroom, especially in their first year in university. However, by accuracy we do not by any means advocate one hundred percent error-free exactness, to achieve which is next to impossible. But during the controlled and semi-controlled language practice period at the beginning of each teaching unit, a high degree of accuracy is required of the students. Not only are the students required to make as few errors as possible, but they are also expected to

manipulate the language system as spontaneously and flexibly as possible. As a matter of fact, the spontaneous and flexible manipulation of the language system already involves an element of fluency. But of course, fluency in language learning goes far beyond that. Immediately after the students have mastered the meaningful language forms taught in each unit, they ought to be given fluency practice. Then control is withdrawn and they are expected to use the language more freely. At this stage, errors should be tolerated, and the teacher should make it clear to the students that error-making is not at all disgraceful; on the contrary, it is only a natural and common occurrence. Even so, a summing-up assessment of the students' performance should be made at the end of each fluency practice, so that the students are aware of their weaknesses and become more and more error-conscious. In this way, accuracy practice and fluency practice are done almost simultaneously unit after unit. In short, it is our belief that accuracy and fluency are interdependent, they are not mutually exclusive and they are not in conflict with each other. A rigorous training in the language system can and should go hand in hand with constant fluency practice, even from the very beginning.

As to the relationship between linguistic competence and communicative competence, it is important to make clear what they mean first. To reiterate, at the foundation stage, linguistic competence means the spontaneous and flexible as well as the correct manipulation of the language system, and communicative competence involves principles of appropriacy and a readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies to cope with certain language situations. Linguistic competence is the basis of communicative competence without linguistic competence, there is no communicative competence to speak of. But communicative competence does not result from linguistic competence automatically. Attempts should be made to provide as much practice as possible for students to develop communicative competence while practice for the achievement of linguistic competence is given.

Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and Translation

Listening, speaking, reading and writing may be taught separately in different ways, but there is also a need for an integrated course with varying emphases at different levels. Specifically *A New*

English Course is designed to be such an integrated course, with listening and speaking being given priority at the beginning. As the course progresses, the emphasis is eventually shifted to reading and writing. But, of course, in no way should any of the four aspects be overlooked at any level, the ultimate goal being an all-round development of the four aspects of language learning.

Translation is a special technique which calls for special training and is not one of the chief concerns of the foundation-stage training. However, it is a convenient means to bring about communication between any two languages. In our coursebooks, translation exercises are provided only to call the students' attention to the contrast between Chinese and English, but not to teach translation as such.

Student-centred Orientation

Language acquisition requires a large amount of practice on the part of the students at the foundation stage. So a good coursebook must see to it that it keeps the students involved as much as possible in various kinds of classroom activities. But the students cannot be left to do things completely by themselves. The teacher should function as a facilitator, giving guidance and advice when necessary.

To sum up, we are by no means attempting a revolution in the production of ELT materials for Chinese students. Instead, we only try to bring about gradual changes which are relevant to the ELT situation in China and which may be readily accepted by teachers and students alike. We hope such gradual changes will result in more efficient learning on the part of the students and will lead to further changes for the better in ELT in China.

A New English Course

A New English Course is a set of five coursebooks ranging from the post-elementary to the pre-advanced level.

Level 1A	Post-elementary
Level 1B and Level 2	Intermediate
Level 3	Post-intermediate
Level 4	Post-intermediate and pre-advanced

Each level consists of a Student's Book, a Teacher's Book, a

Workbook and cassettes. Visual aids will be provided in course of time.

A set of five coursebooks rather than the conventional four has been designed for the foundation stage, because there clearly exists a considerable difference in the level of English attainments among students from different backgrounds. For this reason, Level 1, which is meant for the first-term first-year students, is subdivided into 1A and 1B — the former being for those who have a weaker English language background and the latter for those who are relatively better prepared. The teacher may begin with either 1A or 1B, depending on the needs of the students. 1B is to be used after 1A, and Levels 2, 3 and 4 are to be used in the three succeeding terms following 1B. Therefore the whole set of *A New English Course* can be completed in either two or two and a half years.

Levels 1A, 1B and 2 are structure-based, with grammatical structures cycled regularly.

Each unit in the Student's Book of Level 1A consists of:

- 1) Basic structures in sentence form.
- 2) Drills of grammatical structures in context.
- 3) Short dialogues exemplifying language structures.
- 4) Guided talk with cues provided.
- 5) Interaction activities to be carried out rather freely by the students.
- 6) Reading comprehension.

Each unit in the Student's Book of Levels 1B and 2 consists of:

- 1) Basic structures in sentence form.
- 2) Language structure practice in context.
- 3) Dialogue I with focus on a topic or a situation, and role play.
- 4) Dialogue II with focus on a language function, and practice.
- 5) Reading comprehension.
- 6) Guided writing with focus on sentence connectors and paragraph writing.
- 7) Interaction activities to be carried on freely by the students.

The *Teacher's Books* for Levels 1A, 1B and 2 provide detailed suggestions for the teacher, listening comprehension materials, and other supplementary materials.

The *Workbooks* for Levels 1A, 1B and 2 provide written

exercises corresponding to each section in the Student's Books.

Levels 3 and 4 are text-based. For each unit, there are three texts.

Text A (in the *Student's Book*) is for intensive study with a view to helping the students to acquire reading skills and improve their language. Equal attention is given to comprehension, vocabulary work and discourse features.

Text B (in the *Student's Book*) is related to *Text A* in subject matter. It is not to be studied so intensively as *Text A*, but it helps to enlarge the students' vocabulary and widen the scope of their knowledge. As a matter of fact, it is intended to give the students additional information on the subject matter under discussion.

Text C (in the *Workbook*) may or may not be related to *Text A* or *Text B* in subject matter. It helps the students to comprehend authentic materials, to acquire skills in scanning, and to understand graphic presentations of language.

In addition to the three texts, the following will be featured:

1. Interaction activities in the form of both focused language use activities and unfocused language use activities. These activities help the students to advance from controlled interaction to spontaneous communication.
2. Composition, rhetoric and practical writing which help the students to acquire writing skills.

The *Teacher's Books* for Levels 3 and 4 provide detailed suggestions for the teacher, listening comprehension materials, and other supplementary language materials.

The *Workbooks* for Levels 3 and 4 provide written exercises corresponding to each section in the *Student's Books*.

All in all, *A New English Course* is eclectic in approach. It is an attempt at combining the new with the old to suit the needs of adult learners in China. As this is a novel undertaking in English language teaching materials production, we sincerely invite comments and criticism from our colleagues at home and abroad.

In Defence of the Communicative Approach

Li Xiaoju

China boasts the largest English learning population in the world, and a history of over six decades of English teaching and learning. Thus English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China has become a tradition in its own right. In view of this tradition, what would a project that applied the communicative approach to EFL in China involve? This article, written by the director of one such project, argues for the principles underlying it, and discusses the counter-arguments and counter-practices the project has come up against in the course of its implementation.

THE CECL PROJECT

In 1979, with China newly emerged from its isolation from the outside world and EFL teachers in China just becoming aware of the need to update their teaching, two Canadian teachers and a Chinese teacher¹ were brought together at the Guangzhou (Canton) Foreign Languages Institute and given the task of developing a new set of EFL materials for students majoring in English in tertiary education in China. We named the project CECL² (Communicative English for Chinese Learners), because we intended to base the materials on the communicative approach, and because we wanted to make it clear that the materials are specifically for Chinese learners.

Three years' work on the project has involved us in all sorts

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of controversies. The approach we are trying to implement makes such a break with accepted EFL practice in China that we never expected our project to run a smooth course. The defence I offer may clarify things and may be of interest to colleagues in similar situations outside China.

LEARNING THROUGH USE

That we consider it a primary principle in language teaching to have the students learn the language through using it will very likely go unchallenged anywhere in the world, including China. But here a problem arises: what do you mean by 'use'? To us, use means communication, and communication does not simply mean two people uttering sentences in turn. It takes for granted certain conditions. In a classroom context, there are, I think, three conditions that must be met before any activity can be called 'communicative'.

Real Situations, Real Roles¹

First, the situation must be real, and the role must be real. In our case, the English-using situations and roles must be 'real' to a Chinese foreign language graduate. For example, after graduation, some students will act as interpreters at meetings or negotiations, and others will read and summarize or translate news reports or technical literature. These are situations and roles that are real for our students, and therefore are what we try to simulate or reproduce for them when they are learning English.

Some teachers do not seem to realize there is any difference between a 'real' and a 'false' situation. So long as their students utter sentences in English, they think it is communication, good practice, and that through it they will acquire the competence to communicate in English. But is it likely that they will? Communicative competence does not mean the ability just to utter words or sentences. It involves the ability to react mentally as well as verbally in communication situations. The mental reaction is the root of the verbal reaction. Keeping the students out of real situations and requiring them merely to produce a verbal reaction is like keeping a plant away from the soil while trying to get it to grow and blossom. False situations do not produce mental reactions — even if they sometimes produce

verbal reactions that sound appropriate.

However, far be it for me to disparage lively and colourful language activities such as role play, games, and drama, where the situations and roles are mostly not real in this sense. These activities serve many other purposes. For instance, they may serve to liven up the classroom, boost the students' motivation, develop their imagination, or cultivate their powers of reasoning or literary appreciation. But for the purposes of acquiring a working communicative competence, you still have to rely on down-to-earth communication practice — a great deal of it, too — in real situations and real roles.

Need, Purpose, and Substance for Communication

When people ask questions, it is because they don't know the answer; when they speak or write, it is because they have something to say; and when they listen or read, they do it to get information or ideas. In other words, there is a need and a purpose for communication and something to be communicated. This need, purpose, and substance are what give rise to communication in real life. And therefore they are what we try to provide our students with when we want them to speak, write, listen, or read. We take care not to make students ask such questions as 'Is this a pen?' when everybody can see it is a pen, or to ask each other 'What is your name?' when they already know each other's names. For reading or listening, we wouldn't give our students the story of Lei Feng⁴, which every schoolchild in China knows by heart. Nor would we give them a set of pictures and make them say or write: 'This is Li Ming. He is going to school. Now he meets his friend Zhang Hua', and pretend that our students are 'doing very well' in spoken or written English. We don't think this *is* spoken or written English, because spoken or written English means communicating something through the spoken or written mode of English, and here the students are not communicating anything.

Many teachers constantly worry about their students forming bad language habits. But have they ever asked themselves whether this kind of empty talk might lead the students to divorce language from communication? In fact this is a fairly common bad habit among Chinese foreign language students: the young interpreter may startle his or her foreign guest every now and then with lumps of memorized language that are completely out

of place: the young Chinese postgraduate in a discussion with foreign colleagues may spin out a prefabricated speech, oblivious to what others are talking about.

Freedom and unpredictability

In real life, when you ask people a question, they always have the freedom to answer as they choose, so there is also always an element of unpredictability. In many language textbooks, however, when students are called upon to answer questions, they are often instructed to give only affirmative or negative answers, or 'full' or 'short' answers. In pattern drills, students are often required to give only one form of response, the only 'correct' one. Even in so-called 'conversation practice', students often simply recite a pre-written dialogue or utter sentences according to some prescribed pattern. There is no freedom, no choice, no unpredictability in this. In our opinion, it is not communication, since communication involves freedom and unpredictability.

This applies not merely to conversation or 'interactive' communication. In what is considered purely 'receptive' reading and listening there is also freedom and unpredictability. The reader or listener in a sense is free to negotiate and interpret meaning in his or her way, and at the same time is frequently unable to predict what he or she is going to read and hear. Language learners need to learn to handle this freedom and tackle this unpredictability. Yet 'traditional' teachers never give them a chance. They deprive learners of freedom by always giving them one 'correct' interpretation before they can do any interpreting themselves. They also remove any unpredictability from the text by filtering out whatever is unpredictable. If there are vocabulary or structural items that are not on the students' list of 'learn items', these teachers will take them out. If there are ideas or concepts that the students are not familiar with, they will explain them beforehand. So the students are always in a protected position, where nothing is unpredictable or undecided. In real life, things are entirely different. Even after years of study and work, whenever you sit down to read or listen to something, say a newspaper article or a broadcast talk, can you ever be sure you won't come across any vocabulary items or structures that you haven't learnt before, or any ideas or concepts that are unfamiliar? In real life, there is no teacher to take such things out of the article or the talk or to explain them to you beforehand.

And there is no teacher to give you the 'correct' interpretation; you have to manage by yourself.

So, if students are deprived of the chance ever to learn to cope with freedom and unpredictability at school, how can they manage when they are thrown into a real and unpredictable communication situation afterwards?

FORM BEFORE USE?

So far I have tried to establish one point — that learning a language by use (or communication), if taken seriously, involves some very specific requirements. In view of this, teachers might want to say that after all, language should be learnt first, and put to use afterwards, that students should be made to 'learn' bits of the target language by mimicry and memorization ('mim-mem'), and only after they have 'learnt' these things begin using them. With learning and using thus separated, people find a justification not to include the use of the language in the learning process. Learning a language comes to mean *only* the mastery of form. I would like to raise the following questions about this view:

1. In learning a language, is it possible to separate form from use? Even if it is possible, is it desirable?
2. Suppose we agree that language form, has to be learnt before language use, can it be learnt by 'mim-mem'? And, again, even if it can, is 'mim-mem' the most desirable way even for learning form?
3. Let's suppose that bits of the form of a language can be learnt by 'mim-mem'. After you've learnt them, can you call them up for use when you are communicating? Some research shows that things learnt by 'mim-mem' are stored in a certain part of our brains and are retrievable when we are reciting, but very often not when we are actually communicating (cf. Lamendella, 1979).
4. Let's furthermore suppose that forms learnt by 'mim-mem' can be retrieved for communication. How do you know which is the appropriate form for a particular function in a particular situation and context?

Although learning the form of a language is necessary, it is not to be equated with learning its use. It is at best only a step towards learning use. After all is said and done, learning the use of language has to be achieved through use itself, that is, by communication.

REAL LANGUAGE

Making the students learn through use naturally implies that the target language they come into contact with should be real, that is, authentic, appropriate, and 'global'. Quite a number of teachers seem to take the term 'authentic language' to mean standard native speaker language. In fact, it means language that is actually used in real communication situations, as opposed to language that is artificially made up for purposes other than communication. Specifically to us it means language that is used in communication situations that are *relevant* to our students. If after graduation our students have to read encyclopaedias, then the language of encyclopaedias is authentic for them. We can give them samples of it to read. If in actual work our students will have opportunities to listen to Africans speaking English, then African English is authentic for them. We will try to give them some samples of it to listen to. Of course, we also give them standard native speaker English, because standard native speaker English happens to be in actual use in communication situations that are relevant to our students.

Authentic language naturally entails appropriacy. Appropriacy is part of the authenticity not only of the language used, but also of the situation and the role. What is appropriate for our students is what is appropriate in the situations and roles that are relevant to them. Putting the students in false roles is likely to cause confusion about what is appropriate and inappropriate for them. Teaching the language as mere form, separated from use, situation, and role, is another practice that certainly does not help to sensitize students to appropriacy. It is only through use that appropriacy can be learnt and taught. On the other hand, if language is taught through use and for use, appropriacy is something you cannot ignore.

Another essential feature of authentic language is 'globalness'. By 'global language' I mean language that is whole and multi-dimensional, in which all sorts of forms may occur

naturally as occasion requires. We believe that distorting language to fit it into a grading framework is not only unnecessary: it actually hinders the development of communicative competence in the learners. In a sense it is almost like a parent who is trying to help his or her children to learn about the world, and who is afraid to show them the world in full colour all at once, and decides to present it in monochrome first, adding other colours one by one at proper intervals. No one would claim that children seeing the world in full colour the first time they open their eyes are capable of comprehending everything there and then, but surely delaying revelation of the world's true colours would not help them to learn about it any faster.

Our own experience with the CECL project shows that not only are adult students able to cope with semi-authentic⁵ and authentic language right from the beginning; in a very short time they even develop a palate for things authentic, so that if you give them any reading or listening text that seems phoney, they take one look at it and snort. My advice to teachers who have doubts about their students' ability to cope with authenticity is this: if you give your students a chance, you will find surprising potential in them.

The problem experienced by 'structuralists' over this is created by themselves. Since they have set up a rigid system of grading by structures, they have to keep to this system by sacrificing the authenticity, appropriacy, and globalness of the language they teach. From whatever angle you look at the matter, the sacrifice can in no way be justified. On the one hand, grading by structures is purely artificial and unnecessary; on the other hand, it is authenticity, appropriacy, and globalness all combined that constitute the communicative value of a language, without which the language becomes just a hollow carcass.

GRADING

Another related argument has been raised against our approach. People say that because we insist on authentic, global, and appropriate language from the very beginning, there is no way we can grade our materials, and as a result we have simply thrown to the winds the time-honoured pedagogic principle of grading from easy to difficult.

We haven't thrown away the principle, and we naturally also

grade our material. It is just that our concept of what constitutes difficulty and easiness does not seem to be quite the same as theirs. People are so used to textbooks concentrating on lexical and structural items that they take it for granted that difficulty or easiness can only mean difficulty or easiness of the *vocabulary* and *grammar* of the text. In fact, however, there are many other factors that contribute to the difficulty or easiness of a lesson, for instance, the task you require the students to do. That is how the CECL course is graded: by control of the tasks. Simple tasks are given to the students in the early stages, and more challenging ones in the later stages. Of course, how challenging a task is depends not solely on the task, but also on other factors, including performance requirements and the difficulty of the material. This, in turn, depends on conceptual, cultural, and linguistic difficulty. So, in this sense, we also take into consideration the linguistic level of the material.

SUFFICIENT INPUT

The learners must be provided with sufficient exposure to the target language. This again is a principle which nobody will object to theoretically. Yet when you put it into practice, you are sure to meet with resistance. Here I will try to answer two questions which reflect the prevailing attitude in China as regards this principle.

1. *Is the principle of 'learning sparingly but well' applicable to language learning?*

— The very nature of language and language acquisition contradicts this theory, which arises from a conceptual fallacy. One must remember that language is not knowledge, it is competence. In some ways, learning a language is like boiling a kettle of water. In normal circumstances a certain amount of water has to absorb a certain amount of heat in order to boil. This is a scientific fact and you never ask whether you can make a better job of boiling the water by reducing the heat. The only way to do a better job is to apply more heat, so that it will boil faster. Similarly, in language learning a person has to 'take in' a certain amount of language data in order to be able to internalize the system of the language and to acquire communicative competence in it. You cannot get around it by 'economizing' on the intake.

The only way of doing a better job is to offer more language data and to help the learner deal with it.

There is a counter-argument to this which I would like to mention here. Some say that giving students such a lot of exposure to language is like throwing water over a duck's back. The water runs off and never penetrates. Well, our answer is: if the purpose is to get the duck wet to the skin and a pail of water has failed to achieve it, a sensible person would just add more water or, better still, keep the duck submerged in a pond. Reducing the amount of water to a cupful is just silly.

The crux of the matter lies in different interpretations of the term 'learning', as applied to language. In China when people say you have 'learnt' an English lesson, they generally mean you have looked up and memorized every single word, and translated and analyzed grammatically every sentence in it. If you can't show them your notebook of new words and grammar items, they say you have learnt nothing. However, our materials are not meant to be 'learnt' in that way. Or, more precisely, language itself is not learnt that way. The very fact that our students have done the tasks required in the lesson means that they have learnt something: they have learnt some of the skills which go to make up overall communicative competence. At the same time, they also learn vocabulary and grammar, not by rote, but by assimilation and internalization. And that goes to make up communicative competence, too. Communicative competence, in fact, and not just how many words and how much grammar, is what we should be thinking of when we talk about learning 'sparingly' or 'extensively', 'well' or 'badly'.

2. *Can students digest such a great amount of language data?*

— That depends on what you mean by 'digest'. If it means memorization of every word and analysis of every sentence, of course they can't. We admit that our students did at first feel a little panicky when they saw a 'lesson' fifty or sixty pages long. Coming from schools where 'digestion' of a lesson *does* mean memorization of every word and analysis of every sentence, the students naturally have difficulty adjusting to a new way of learning. But as soon as they realize what is required of them, they no longer find quantity a problem.

Concern about students' 'indigestion' is, in fact, unwarranted. Let's suppose our students were not in China, but were learning English in an English-speaking country. Would we ever worry

about whether they were able to 'digest' the enormous amount of language data they come into contact with? Would we forbid them to go out into the street or to talk to native speakers or watch TV? Actually, what teachers of English in China ought to be worrying about is not giving the students too much, but giving them too little.

TASKS AND SKILLS

Traditionally, a language lesson in China consists of a focus text and a list of language points drawn from the text. The language points are about grammar or vocabulary: they concern only the *form* of the language, since the sole objective of the course is to teach language form. *Our objective* is communicative competence, which, for pedagogical reasons, is broken down into communicative skills. To acquire these skills, the students are set tasks. We haven't thrown away grammar and vocabulary. They are just not the major content or objective of our lessons; they are dealt with only as and when the tasks require them.

Thus, what constitutes a lesson in our course is a series of tasks to be performed by the students. For instance, they may be required to read or listen to a report on, say, smoking, for a general impression, specified information, the main message, or the author's/speaker's attitude. They may at the same time be required to take notes, write a summary, transfer the information, or make some evaluation. They may be required to carry on a conversation, a debate, or correspondence with a foreign friend on such topics as the religion problem in China. These tasks, in their turn, involve different skills, such as the ability to skim or scan with the eyes or the ears, to read or listen between the lines, to get round some unfamiliar vocabulary or structural items so as to comprehend or express meaning by relying on the context, to recognize and to make use of various discourse signals, to employ one's own knowledge of the world, or one's reasoning, etc.

What has been the reaction of 'traditional' teachers to lessons which depart so dramatically from the familiar pattern? They miss the focus text — their nice, compact text of just the right length and level, in which they can find language points they want to elaborate on, and on which hours can be spent explaining, analyzing, paraphrasing, asking questions, practising patterns, reading aloud, retelling, etc., until the students very nearly, if not

literally, learn every word by heart. They say the CECL materials are all right for extensive reading, but not for intensive reading,⁶ intensive reading is where students really learn things: extensive reading serves only to help consolidate or supplement what has been learnt in intensive reading.

Our answer to this is, first of all, we did not design a reading course, but an *integrated* course, in which students are supposed not only to use and develop all four major skills — listening, speaking, reading, writing — but also constantly to combine and integrate them in use, and therefore to develop not four separate skills, but rather composite skills involving sometimes one, sometimes two or more of the conventional four skills.

Also, even if we were discussing only reading and nothing else, I would say there are not just two kinds of reading — intensive and extensive — but many kinds. For example, the way you read a newspaper at breakfast is definitely not the same as the way you read a science thesis for research. And the ways you read a novel for pleasure or an almanac for reference are entirely different again. When you go into a library, you can spend just a few minutes going over a dozen books, then you may spend a whole month reading just one of them. Capable readers are always able to shift and vary their speed and mode of reading as the purpose and other circumstances demand. They have at their disposal several different reading skills from which they can at any time select and which can be combined. Therefore in training our students to read, we should help them to acquire this ability to shift, adjust, and combine, rather than turn them into some kind of robot fitted with only two reading programs — one for 'intensive' and another for 'extensive' reading.

There are teachers who cherish the illusion that, when the students have been taught intensive reading skills, extensive reading skills will take care of themselves. The fact is, extensive reading skills have to be taught too, and they are no easier than intensive reading skills. The way so-called 'intensive reading' which is commonly taught in China not only does not help to promote extensive reading skills, it may actually fossilize the reading style of students so that they are hindered from ever reading efficiently. To us, intensive reading does not mean a focus on the individual words and sentences. It means getting at the interrelation between the parts of the discourse and between the discourse and its context, and eventually also getting at a fuller meaning of the discourse as a whole.

So far we have been discussing reading only to illustrate a point, which is by analogy also true of listening, and, in a converse way, of writing and speaking. To sum up, the traditional way of teaching the four skills and especially 'intensive reading' in fact reflects a superficial, segregative, and formalistic view of language skills and language. We need to find ways to treat language skills *integratively* within their sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic context. We believe dealing with them in terms of tasks is one such way.

STUDENT-CENTREDNESS

A communicative approach presupposes that students take the central role in learning. This idea of student-centredness is first of all embodied in the design of the syllabus. We claim that our communicative syllabus is student-oriented because it gears its objectives to what students actually need after graduation, and it is so designed that the students are given a chance to do the learning themselves, instead of having everything done for them by the teacher.

The traditional text-analysis syllabus cannot be considered a student-oriented syllabus, not simply because the teacher takes up almost all the time in class, but also because the content and design of the course are determined not by the students' needs, but by the 'texts' which have been selected solely for their 'literary value'. As to the structural syllabus, it is a syllabus designed and based on the analysis of the structure of the target language. We do not deny that the students need structure. The problem with the structural syllabus is that it deals with the structure of the target language as form existing independent of use and therefore as something that has to be taught according to its own internal system, regardless of the needs of the learners. In view of that, we don't think a structural syllabus can be called student-oriented, even if students 'speak' and 'practise' one hundred per cent of class time. We cannot evaluate the success of a lesson simply by counting how many utterances are made per students in one class hour. A student-oriented lesson may possibly be one where the students do not utter a single sound from beginning to end (for example in a speed-reading or listen-and-write lesson). The important thing is that full rein is given to their initiative and they are actively involved in communicative activities requiring

speaking, listening, writing, or reading — and thinking. I have visited very impressive classes where the teacher and students perform a very 'lively' show. But there is an essential difference between a show and a communicative class. In a show, the actors/students do and say everything thinking: 'This is what the director/teacher wants me to do and say now', while in a communicative class there is no director: the students (sometimes with the teacher as just another participant) do what they need to do to carry out the given communication task.

So the teacher's role in a communicative class is completely different from that in any other type of class. In China, the tradition of the teacher occupying the centre in the classroom is still very much alive, and teachers on our project naturally feel a bit uprooted when they are removed from that position. Some of them are taking it pretty easy though, because now they don't have to prepare a 'lecture' for every class, or supply the 'correct' answer to every exercise the students do. Other, more conscientious teachers feel somewhat guilty because they 'have nothing to do in class' and don't think they are doing their duty. Of course, the communicative teacher's role is neither to give lectures nor to supply correct answers. And if teachers think it is their duty to take over everything from the students, then it would be much better for them to do nothing at all. To learn the language, the students themselves must go through the process of learning. The teacher's job is only to provide the *conditions* for this process, set it going, observe it, try to understand it, give guidance, help it along, analyze and evaluate it. It is also the teacher's job to help the students themselves understand this process, to turn it from an unconscious, irrational, patternless process to a conscious, rational and patterned process — patterned in an individual way for each student. That is what makes the communicative teacher's task so demanding. On the other hand, it is also a most rewarding job — a job full of interest, life, creativity, versatility, and possibilities, because the students are released from a passive role, and are now interested, alive, and creative.

LANGUAGE LEARNING — AN ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The traditional text-analysis school looks upon language teaching

as a 'knowledge-imparting' process, and language learning as a 'knowledge-receiving' process. The structuralist pattern-drill school, unlike the traditional school, lays down language skills as the objective. But language skills are conceived of as a set of habits, and language learning as a 'habit-forming' process. The communicative school, whose objective is communicative competence, regards language learning as an *active development* process.

Both the traditional and the structuralist schools treat language learners as passive recipients. They don't have to take any initiative. They just wait there to be filled with knowledge or to be trained in habits. The habit-forming process is rather like the programming done on a robot: any initiative on the part of the robot is not only superfluous, it may actually get in the way. On the other hand, the communicative approach demands a high degree of initiative from learners. They are active agents throughout the process. Mechanically formed habits are only skin deep, whereas communicative competence is something that involves the creative functioning of the mind. And only one's own active efforts can ensure the development of such a competence.

In addition, neither the traditional nor the structuralist school gives sufficient credit to the learner's intelligence. All that 'traditional' teachers require of students is the ability to receive and store up in their heads the knowledge handed out to them. That presumably involves understanding what the teacher says. Yet it is a very passive kind of understanding. The structuralist teacher doesn't even require that much. His or her students are supposed to know only the surface meaning of the words they repeat, and even that understanding is not always necessary in order to do a pattern drill. The lessons and the drills seldom include anything that may require learners to stand on their own feet intellectually, let alone make any intellectual leaps. Everything is deliberately designed to require the minimum possible intellectual effort, and therefore also to involve the minimum risk of the learner making mistakes and forming bad habits.

I am not claiming that students going through traditional or structuralist courses do not use their intellect. Most of them do, in spite of the fact that it is not required of them. This is because they can't help using it if they are seriously trying to learn the language. My argument against both these schools is this: since it is a fact that our students are educated intelligent adults, and

since they will try to employ their intellect anyhow, why not make full use of it to the advantage of the learning process, instead of ignoring or even suppressing it?

Moreover, we believe that the teacher's duty is not just to exploit the students' intellect but, even more important, to help develop it. This idea of development again distinguishes the communicative school from the other two schools. Neither of the latter includes in their concept of the language-learning process the idea of development.

The traditional school sees the language-learning process as one of quantitative increase — quantitative increase of knowledge of the target language. This is a view often held, even by teachers who wouldn't admit that they belong to the traditional school. Witness the fact that in English teaching programmes in China, no matter what level they are or what approach they profess to follow, a definite number of words and a definite list of grammar items are invariably laid down as final objectives. In our view, learning a language is a *developmental* process which must necessarily go beyond quantitative increase to qualitative change. Not that we do not consider quantitative increase necessary, but setting up such increases as final objectives will tend only to make the learners stop at them and never go beyond, and therefore never really learn the language.

The structuralists will also find this idea of development alien. Starting from the assumption that teaching a language means nothing more than training the learner in a set of habits, they naturally set about blocking off any possible diversions that may lead the learner into so-called 'bad habits'. Language learners are more or less looked upon as white mice in a maze who have an innate propensity to take the wrong turn when the opportunity arises. For instance, they have tendencies to let their first language 'interfere' with the second, to draw analogies between L1 and L2 learning experiences, to rationalize, to ask why, etc., etc. All these have to be kept in check, so that students may keep to the one and only correct route. In a word, for the structuralists the whole process of language-learning is a disciplining process.

This is quite at odds with the rationale of the communicative approach. Those of us who have adopted this approach believe that learning a language should not mean restricting or thwarting learners. On the contrary, it should help them to grow and to mature. We believe that in every learner there is potential to be developed, and we have our eyes on this, rather than on any

'undesirable' tendencies. Learning a language will help learners to develop this potential, and, in turn, only by developing it can they learn a language. In a narrow sense, communicative competence is developed, and in a broad sense the learner also develops as an intelligent being. We consider that a foreign language course has failed if a learner coming through it has gained nothing beyond the language, or, in other words, hasn't become a fuller person who can play a really useful role in international communication between cultures, which of course goes far beyond mere linguistic exchange.

Those are the differences between the communicative view and the traditional and structuralist views of the language-learning process. These differences actually go deeper: they have their roots in differences in philosophy of education. The view that language learning is acquiring knowledge comes from the idea that to educate is to impart knowledge; the view that language learning is habit formation is based on the idea that to educate is to discipline; while the view that it is competence development has its origin in the idea that education is development. Since in China the knowledge-imparting plus disciplining theory is still fairly universally accepted, and not only in language teaching, it really is not surprising that a communicative approach to EFL should meet with stubborn and protracted resistance.

A CRITERION FOR JUDGING PERFORMANCE

Since the goal of our programme is communicative competence, naturally the criterion for the assessment of the students' performance is *effective communication*. This may not be so obvious as it sounds. It implies that the performance being assessed must not be recitation, mimicry, copying, or reproducing formulae. If what you require of language students is the ability to use the language in communication, it stands to reason that you should test and judge them as they use the language in communication. You would think a driving test crazy if after a series of lessons it tested candidates, not in driving a car, but in drawing a picture of a car. Yet when students are given a test in English in China, it is often their ability to memorize words, formulae, and texts — not their ability to communicate — that is tested.

Another argument which sounds almost as obvious is that the

communication we judge our students by ought to be relevant. For instance, we shouldn't judge our students' performance in such communication situation as ordering groceries or applying for a job. The reason is simply that it is highly unlikely that they would ever need to do these things in English in real life.

Relevance is also something we have to bear in mind when we measure effectiveness. We cannot talk of a performance being 'effective' or 'ineffective' without reference to the situation, the role, and the task. The crudest kind of survival English, which may be fairly effective for an immigrant applying for a dish-washing job in a New York Chinatown restaurant, cannot be considered an effective means of communication for a member of a Chinese official delegation visiting the New York State University, for example. In our understanding, effective communication entails two things: linguistic accuracy and sociolinguistic appropriacy. Inappropriate performance, even if it is perfectly accurate linguistically, can never be really effective as communication, not only because it doesn't produce the desired effect, but also because it sometimes produces the opposite effect. On the other hand, linguistic inaccuracy also prevents communication being carried on effectively. It follows logically that the requirement we set for accuracy is higher: we demand accuracy in actual communication, while the structuralists ask for accuracy only when form is isolated from use.

Some people say that students who are taught with our communicative materials make more errors in their English than those taught according to a structuralist approach. Even if there is some truth in this, it does not discredit the approach. Suppose you give students only one page of materials every week, and all they have to do is to memorize and recite things from this single page: certainly they won't make many mistakes. But if you give students fifty pages of materials per week and ask them to use what they get from them creatively, you are giving them many more chances to use the language, and also many more opportunities to make mistakes. Consequently it is natural that they make more mistakes, at least in the earlier stages. We certainly wouldn't try to cut down the students' errors by cutting down their chances of using the language. On the contrary, we know that it is only through use — plenty of use — that accuracy and appropriacy will come and communicative effectiveness increase. It is communicative competence that we aim at, and therefore it is communicative competence that we should test. It

is a deplorable fact that in China, English tests and examinations have not yet gone beyond linguistic form, and learners' performance is still assessed only in terms of *linguistic* competence. As the saying goes, the examination is the piper that calls the tune. Perhaps the tide will turn only when language testing has changed its focus.

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Notes

1. Wendy Allen, Nina Spada, and the author. Among others who have worked on the project are: Tim Lockwood, Carol Pomeroy, Caz Philcox, and currently Susan Maingay and Gail Langley.
2. The project was originally named ECP (English for Communicative Purposes), which was later changed to CECL.
3. 'Real' is used here as opposed to 'false', in the sense of 'relevant to reality'.
4. Lei Feng was an ordinary soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. He did a lot of good deeds and became well known throughout China.
5. This refers to those parts of the materials written or rewritten by the materials writers, where no materials of appropriate length, topic, difficulty, etc., are available. What distinguishes 'semi-authentic' language from 'simplified' language is that the latter is fabricated to serve the purpose of teaching language forms, while the purpose of the former remains communication, and it therefore preserves the essential features of authentic language.
6. In China, 'intensive reading' is actually not a reading course, but the core course in EFL in which everything the teacher wants to teach (grammar, vocabulary, reading aloud, etc.) is taught through a written text.

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A Skill-based Approach to Freshman English — An Experimental Report

Yue Mei-yun

This paper reports an experiment in a skill-based approach to Freshman English, which was conducted in the academic year 1982-83, in the English Section, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Nanjing University. It was an attempt to break away from the traditional predominance of intensive reading, to shift the focus from linguistic forms to language skills, and to bridge the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence. The first section of this paper states the rationale for the experiment; the second section describes the experiment, and the third section presents the results. And the last section discusses the strengths and the problems of the experiment.

THE RATIONALE

Since the early 1950s the predominant course in Freshman English in this university, as in most English departments and sections in other institutions of higher learning in China, has been

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what is known as intensive reading. Its predominance manifests itself in both the class hours it takes as well as the time and effort it draws from the teachers and students. The main objective of this course is "to develop students' abilities and skills to use with accuracy the language being learned." (Qingdao Conference, November, 1980). To achieve this objective, the audiolingual approach is recommended. The textbooks recommended are Book 1 and Book 2 of *English* compiled by the English Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute. The objective, the approach and the textbooks for intensive reading indicate that it is in effect not a reading course, but a comprehensive course meant for training in the four skills, the focus of which is on intensiveness and accuracy.

Although such an approach played its role in the history of English teaching in China, it has obvious weaknesses viewed both from language teaching theories and from its over thirty years of application.

According to language teaching theories, although the four skills are related, each of them has its own special requirements and cannot be acquired without special training. In discussing the relationship between communication acts, Rivers and Temperley (1978) point out that "Being able to speak comprehensively does not necessarily ensure ability to comprehend normal native speech; on the other hand many people develop a very high level of aural comprehension without being able to express themselves freely. Both areas require serious attention." Paulston and Bruder (1976) hold a similar view when they say, "We now believe that the spoken and written forms of a language differ qualitatively, both in syntax and vocabulary, that if we want our students to be able to read, we must teach them to do so." In reviewing different methodological proposals of the 1970s, Lado says, "... most of the proposals of the 1970s say nothing about reading as an aid to mastering the language or about developing reading skill as a major objective in its own right ... Probably the greatest weakness of the audiolingual approach was the erroneous assumption that if the students learned to speak and understand speech, reading would take care of itself" (Lado, 1981).

In our teaching practice, we find that the following problems arise with the predominance of intensive reading.

Firstly, there is undue emphasis on certain skills at the expense of other skills. Besides intensive reading, there are two other Freshman courses, i.e., extensive reading and listening. In

principle, intensive reading aims at training all the four language skills. In practice, however, the emphasis is on speaking and listening, especially speaking, while reading and writing are generally neglected. Although extensive reading is supposed to take care of "cultivating students' abilities in reading comprehension, increasing their reading speed, and broadening their scope of knowledge" (Qingdao Conference, November, 1980), this task cannot be fulfilled because there are only two class hours each week, and this course is generally regarded as subsidiary and little importance is attached to it. The same is true with writing.

Secondly, the quantity of language materials to be learned is greatly restricted. Since the emphasis of intensive reading is on intensiveness, and since whatever is taught is supposed to be mastered, a great restriction is placed on the quantity of language materials to be taught. Students spend 8 class hours every week only to learn a short text of 100-1,000 words. Even if they have mastered everything in the text, what they have learned is limited in quantity. This greatly restricts their ability to understand and use the language.

Thirdly, grammar orientation is strong. Intensive reading follows the structural syllabus, emphasizing the analysis and repeated drills of the grammatical structures and language points. As a result, the attention of both the teacher and the students is concentrated on language forms while the meaning (the message or ideas) which these forms convey is neglected. What is worse, with this approach a bad habit is formed of reading word by word through the analysis of grammatical structures. This greatly hinders students' reading speed as well as their comprehension.

In the spring semester of 1982 we made a comprehensive analysis of the English levels of all our Freshmen admitted through national entrance examinations since 1978. We found great difference between them and the students who entered the university during the Cultural Revolution without taking any entrance examination. The former had learned English for at least four years at secondary schools, and had further studied English pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary in one way or another in preparation for the national entrance examination. Therefore, they had a better and more solid foundation in English than the latter, especially in grammar. Their mean scores in the national entrance examination are shown below:

Class graduating in	78	79	80	81	82
Grade Mean score	78.77	81.19	88.76	86.28	86.72

If students who entered the university before 1977 were beginners, those who entered the university through the national entrance examination in 1977 or 1978 (class of 81 or 82) should be intermediate or pre-intermediate. In order to find out their strengths and weaknesses in English, we gave all the 185 students in our English Section a TOEFL test. The results are shown in Table 1.

Section Score Grade	I Listening comprehension	II Structure & written expression	III Vocabulary & reading comprehension	Mean total
Senior (78 Grade)	47.89	57.92	52.43	527.60
Junior (79 Grade)	45.15	57.68	49.95	508.08
Sophomore (80 Grade)	44.26	55.86	46.63	493.44
Freshman (81 Grade)	40.51	54.15	41.53	453.10

Table 1

The results of the TOEFL show that in Section II (structure) the students scored highest and the differences between grades were least (only 2.77 between the seniors and the freshmen), whereas in Section I (listening) and Section III (vocabulary and reading) they scored lower and the differences between grades were greater (in listening 7.36 between the seniors and the freshmen; in vocabulary and reading 10.90 between the seniors and the freshmen). This shows that our students enter the university with a better foundation in grammar than in listening and reading. After four years of training, this situation has not changed although their listening and reading abilities have risen to different degrees. Still listening and reading remain the weaker

links. This also shows that what should be emphasized in teaching is not grammar but the four language skills. In practice, however, instead of devoting more time and energy to developing the four skills, we focus our attention on mastering grammatical structures. The current approach with the predominance of intensive reading does not help much in enhancing students' listening and reading abilities nor in enlarging their vocabulary or in developing their writing ability. Something must be done to change this situation.

THE EXPERIMENT

Objective

The objective of the experiment was to break away from the predominance of intensive reading, to enhance training in the four skills so as to enable the students to finally acquire communicative competence.

Subjects

Our subjects were 47 freshmen who entered the university in the fall semester of 1982. At the beginning of the semester we gave them a streamlining examination and based on the scores of this examination and those of the national entrance examination more or less equal numbers of students of the same level of scores were assigned to three classes. The medium class (Class 1) was chosen as the experiment class, and the other two classes were control classes. The results of the two examinations are shown in Table 2.

Exam Score Class	Streamlining exam			National entrance exam		
	Mean	Highest	Lowest	Mean	Highest	Lowest
Experiment Class	78.8	89	62.5	85.75	93	64
Class 2	79.8	91	72	87.34	93.5	69
Class 3	77.8	86.5	62.5	87.06	94	74

Table 2

Courses

In the first semester the control classes followed the traditional audiolingual approach, with intensive reading as the major course, which took 8 class hours per week, and extensive reading and listening as the two subsidiary courses, each taking 2 class hours respectively. The experiment class followed a skill-based approach, for which two courses were designed in accordance with the two media of language, namely, listening and speaking (the spoken medium), and reading and writing (the written medium), each taking 6 class hours per week. In the second semester, however, under the pressure of the students of the control classes, it was decided that the control classes follow the same approach as the experiment class, and take the same courses. As a result, the distinction between the experiment class and the control classes no longer existed in the second semester. Although the control classes were nearly one semester behind the experiment class.

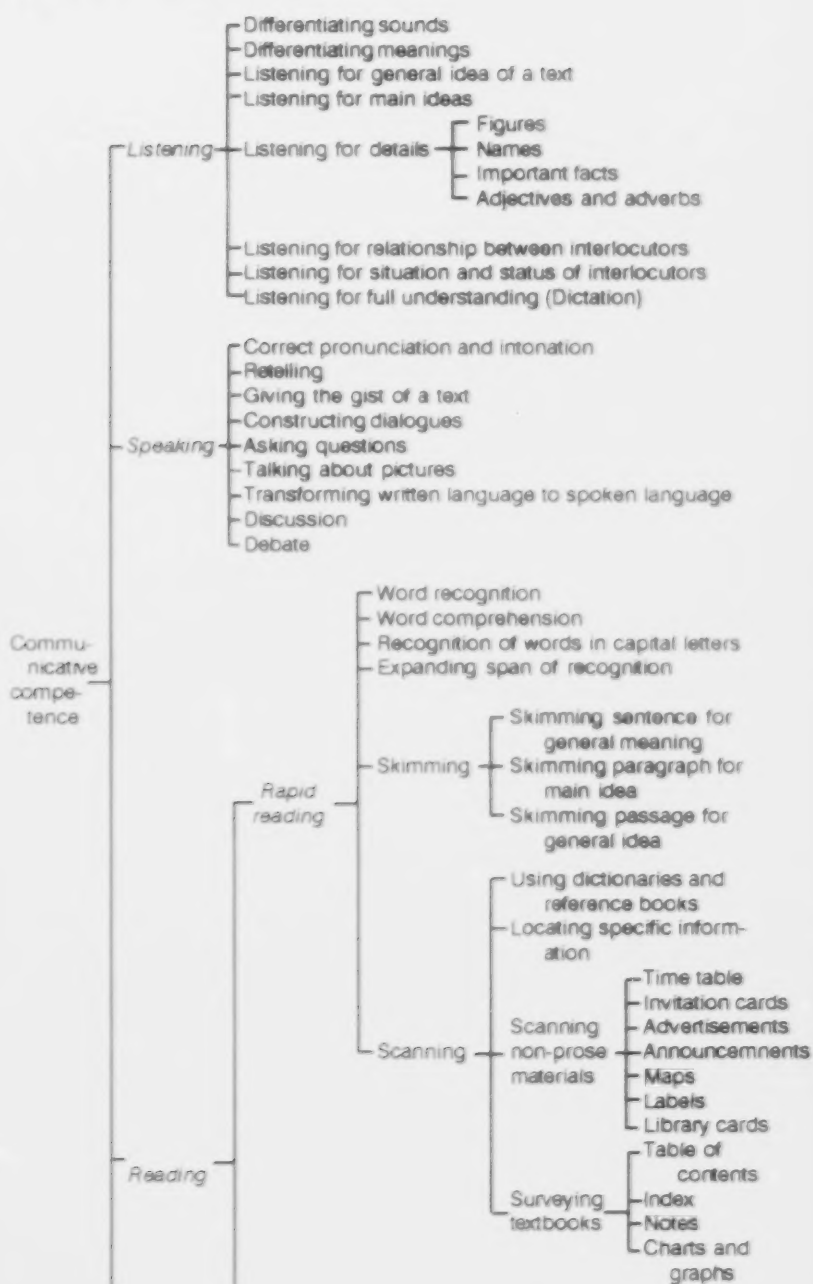
Textbooks and Teaching Materials

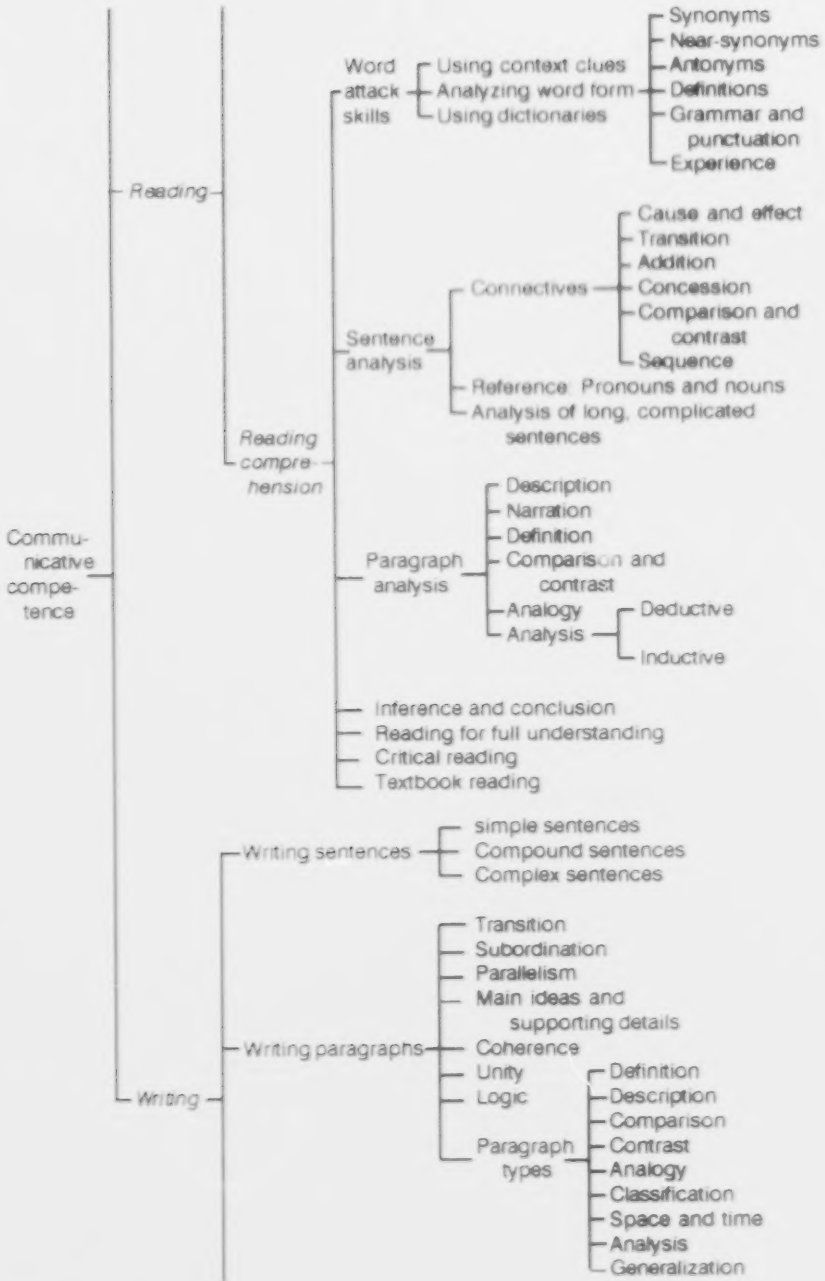
Except for the intensive reading of the control classes in the first semester, which used Book 1 and the first ten lessons of Book 2 of *English*, and the writing of the experiment class which used *Sentence Craft 1* and 2 compiled by Hawaii English Program-Secondary Management, all the teaching materials for the other courses were selected from native speakers and writers.

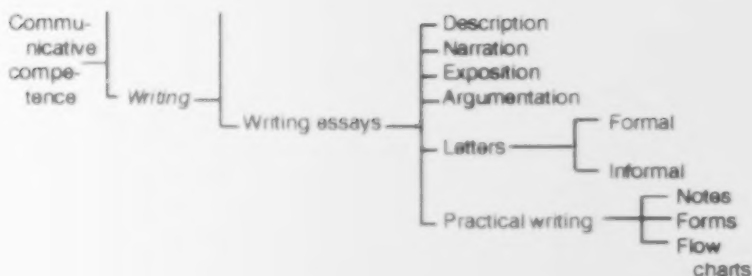
Procedures

The procedure of the control classes is well-known and need not be described here. The procedure of the experiment class can be summarized as follows:

First, the objective to cultivate the students' communicative competence was to be attained through training in the four language skills, which in turn were broken into many sub-skills in actual teaching. The following is a chart of those sub-skills:







Although the division of sub-skills is crude and incomplete, it provided a sort of syllabus for selecting materials and teaching. Through the training of the sub-skills the four skills were developed and their development would lead to the acquisition of communicative competence. Herein lies the basic difference between the skill-based approach and the traditional audiolingual approach. The former is based on a skill syllabus whereas the latter is based on a structural syllabus.

Second, in this approach, the four skills were trained through the interactions of listening and speaking, and of reading and writing. The assumption was that listening is the basis of speaking and reading is the basis of writing, and that without extensive training in listening and reading, it would be difficult to develop the abilities of speaking and writing. Therefore, in terms of time allotment, we emphasized the portion of listening and that of reading, each taking 4 class hours out of 6. From the very beginning the students were encouraged to listen and read extensively materials recorded or written by native speakers and writers of English. Speaking and writing were based on listening and reading.

The listening and speaking course was divided into three stages. *Stage One* (about 4 weeks) was devoted to the training of correct pronunciation and intonation, and the cultivation of students' ability to differentiate sounds and meanings. *Stage Two* (about 4 weeks) was devoted to the removal of obstacles in listening (e.g. figures and names), and to the cultivation of students' ability to get specific facts. The exercises included listening and answering questions, listening and drawing pictures, listening and retelling, and dictation. In *Stage Three*, which lasted till the end of the second semester, the students were exposed to different types of discourse. The remaining time of the first

semester was devoted to listening to short stories with a view to developing students' abilities of grasping the main ideas, differentiating the status of the interlocutors and their relationships, as well as the time and place in which the story took place. After listening the students were required to retell the story, ask and answer questions about the story, carry on dialogues based on the story, or sometimes role-play the characters in the story. The second semester was devoted to listening to the Voice of America, the first two quarters listening to the special English programme, and the last two quarters listening to the standard English programme. After listening, the students were required to retell, discuss, or debate about what they had just heard from the broadcast.

The reading portion of the reading and writing course was designed to achieve two objectives, speed and comprehension of reading. The training of reading speed consisted of three aspects:

Discrete skill exercises: These were designed to develop the students' skills and strategies in rapid reading such as word recognition and comprehension, capital letter recognition, expansion of span of recognition, and grasping general idea and main ideas (in the first semester) and skimming and scanning (in the second semester).

Listening while reading: This was designed to enhance the students' ability to read in chunks through listening to tapes done by native speakers.

Timed reading: This was designed for the students to apply the skills and strategies learned in discrete skill exercises to reading authentic discourse. The training of reading comprehension consisted of two aspects:

- *Discrete skill exercises:* These were designed to train the various sub-skills for reading comprehension such as word attack skills, the analysis of organizations of sentences and paragraphs.
- *Comprehension reading:* This was designed for the students to apply the skills and strategies learned in the discrete skill exercises to reading different types of materials for different degrees of comprehension. After reading, the students were

required to write the general idea, main ideas, the gist, summary or outline of what they had read.

The writing portion consisted of two aspects:

- *Sentence-combining exercises*: These were designed to help students to learn to write different types of sentences and paragraphs as the foundation for writing essays.
- *From controlled to free writing*: Through a series of sentence-combining exercises the students were enabled to write descriptions, narrations, directions and explanations.

Third, the training of language skills was integrated with the broadening of students' scope of background knowledge, and the development of students' study skills. The assumption was that sooner or later the students will have to study all by themselves without any help from the teacher. To enable them to do so, it is necessary to help them not only to learn language skills but also study skills such as how to use dictionaries and reference books, how to use the library, and how to adjust their study methods to different types of study for different purposes.

Fourth, the development of the four skills was achieved by making in-class activities guide out-of-class activities. The training of the four skills in class was under the supervision of the teachers, who offered prompt help to the students by correcting their bad habits in study such as subvocalization in reading, and lack of concentration in listening. However, class hours were limited, hence the necessity of organizing students' out-of-class activities. The students were organized into study groups and pairs to practise the four skills after class, using the skills and strategies learned in class. Every week, they were required to listen to at least one tape and to talk about the content of the tape with their partner or discuss it in their group. They were also required to read at least one simplified reader and write a synopsis of the story, which their partner must read before it was handed in to the teacher. The teachers would spend a few minutes in class checking on the out-of-class assignments to ensure that these activities were carried out. In this way, the students not only practised the four skills in class but also did so after class, which in turn greatly enhanced their four skills.

THE RESULTS

At the end of the first semester the same set of tests of the four skills were administered to the experiment class and the control classes. In addition, a TOEFL test was administered at the beginning of the second semester to test the proficiency of the students. The results of all the tests show that the experiment class was, to different degrees, better than the control classes in the four skills.

Oral test:

The questions were based on the intensive reading of the control classes. The test consisted of reading aloud a new passage, answering questions based on the passage, and answering questions about the students' life and study. Students of the experiment class and control classes were mixed up and put into three groups, each group tested by two teachers using the same criteria. The results are shown in Table 3.

No. of Students Class	Score						
	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	D	F
Experiment class	2	4	4	4	2	0	0
Class 2	1	5	4	4	0	0	2
Class 3	1	3	5	4	1	1	0

Table 3

Written test:

The questions were also based on the intensive reading of the control classes. The test consisted of listening, grammar, and translation from Chinese into English. The results are shown in Table 4.

Section Score Class	Listening 10%	Gram- mar 70%	Transla- tion 20%	Mean Total	Highest	Lowest
Experiment class	6.4	66.4	16.3	89.1	96	85
Class 2	6.0	67.6	14.8	88.4	96	79
Class 3	6.5	67.3	15.4	89.2	95	80

Table 4

Reading test:

The reading test consisted of timed reading and reading comprehension.

- 1) Timed reading: A passage at 2,000 word level was selected. The students first read it at the speed of 104 wpm, then answered 10 true/false questions based on the passage without looking hard at it.
- 2) Reading comprehension: This consisted of the reading comprehension test of the 1980 EPT and 10 sentences from the TOEFL. There were 40 multiple-choice questions. The results of the reading test are shown in Table 5.

Section Score Class	Timed reading 20%	Reading compre- hension 80%	Mean total	Highest	Lowest
Experiment Class	16.8	63.5	80.3	90	69
Class 2	16.2	58.7	74.9	84	64
Class 3	16.3	58	74.3	83	60

Table 5

Writing:

The students were asked to write a narration on "Spring Festival" in 50 minutes in class. Their writings were scored according to the T-unit Analysis. The results are shown in Table 6.

Class	Score	Item	Mean T-unit length	Mean errors/T-unit
Experiment Class			12.21	0.26
Class 2			10.99	0.28
Class 3			11.48	0.28

Table 6

TOEFL:

The TOEFL results are shown in Table 7.

Class	Score	Section	I Listen- ing	II Struc- ture	III Read- ing	Mean total	Highest	Lowest
Experiment Class			43.69	53.69	44.31	472.38	503	417
Class 2			41.38	55.06	43.13	465.13	500	427
Class 3			43.37	53.13	42.87	464.80	513	420

Table 7

The TOEFL results of the experiment class was also compared with those of the freshmen grade of 1981. The comparison is shown in Table 8.

Class	Score	Section	I Listening	II Structure	III Reading	Mean Total
Experiment Class			43.69	53.69	44.31	472.38
81 Classes			40.51	54.15	41.53	453.10

Table 8

In the second semester, since all the three classes followed the same approach, and the control classes had to use the teaching materials which the experiment class had used in the first semester, different tests were administered to the control classes

and the experiment class. It would be of no more significance to compare the test results. Only the test results of the experiment class are given.

Listening:

Five items were taped from Voice of America standard English news broadcast. The students listened to the tape three times and then answered 10 true/false questions. The results were:

Mean	Highest	Lowest
80	100	40

Speaking:

The students were asked to read a new passage aloud, then answer questions based on the passage, finally they had a talk with the teacher on some general topics such as their plans for the summer vacation. The results were:

Scores	A-	B+	B	C+	C	C-
No. of Students	3	3	4	2	2	2

Reading:

A power builder and rate builder from the SRA Reading Laboratory IVa (Orange) (readability Grade 8) were used to test the students' reading comprehension and speed. The results were:

Section \ Score	Mean Total	Highest	Lowest
Speed (wpm.)	210.7	275	174
Comprehension (%)	82	100	64

Writing:

The students were asked to write a description of their best friends. Their writings were scored according to the T-unit Analysis. The results were:

Mean T-unit length	Mean errors/T-unit
13.5	0.12

DISCUSSION

By the end of the first semester the skill-based approach had already shown its advantages over the traditional audiolingual approach with intensive reading as the core. The experiment class performed better in all the tests on the four skills except in the grammar section. This upset students of the control classes so much that they refused to follow "the beaten track any more", and insisted that they be treated equally. That the skill-based approach proved more effective may be because it has these strengths:

- 1) Each course has its explicit objectives and emphasis on the training of skills. The two courses which were designed in accordance with the two media not only represented the different characteristic features of the spoken and the written forms of English, but also guaranteed the interaction of listening and speaking, and that of reading and writing, which is essential in communication.
- 2) Since the skill-based approach broke the fetters of the intensiveness of intensive reading, the students were provided with more opportunities of extensive practice in the four skills, and were exposed to more language materials by native speakers of English. They also had more opportunities of using English in speaking and writing.
- 3) The skill-based approach integrated language form and content, speed and comprehension, and fluency and accuracy

by emphasizing the communication of message. Its obvious advantage was shown in speed and fluency. For instance, at the beginning of the first semester, the mean reading speed of the experiment class was 77 wpm (the fastest being 100 wpm and the slowest 50 wpm). By the end of the second semester, the mean speed rose to 210.7 wpm (the fastest being 275 wpm and the slowest 174 wpm) with a mean comprehension score of 82%, while the readability of the reading materials rose from Grade 5 to Grade 8.

However, because this is a new approach, and because the teachers had to compile their own teaching materials while teaching full time, the following problems arose.

- The teaching materials, especially those of reading, were not scientifically graded. There were too many new words, which imposed a great stress on the students.
- Because more time was spent on listening and reading as compared with that on speaking and writing, the students' abilities of speaking and writing were not as good as those of listening and reading.
- Because we did not attach any importance to grammar and translation, our students lacked training in these respects.

Our experiment was an attempt to find a better way of teaching English to English majors in Chinese universities. As it was the first experiment of this kind, many problems remain to be solved. We sincerely welcome criticisms and suggestions from our colleagues.

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The Design of a New Syllabus — A Case Report

Yang Huizhong

BACKGROUND

The syllabus of a course is a document of guidance, which sets out the objectives, the content and methodological principles of a course, and provides the basis for materials development, classroom teaching and testing. The College English Syllabus which the Ministry of Education has just approved and promulgated is such a document, which all the departments of science and technology in universities and colleges in China must abide by in their English courses. Since 1949 there have been in existence three syllabuses for college English, developed under the Ministry of Education — the 1962, 1980 and 1985 Syllabuses. The three syllabuses reflected the development of college English teaching, and the changes in methodological thinking in China.

The objectives of college English are very much dependent on social needs and the political situation of a country. Obviously, the *Service English Syllabus* designed in 1980 no longer suits the rapidly changing situation of today. This is because:

- The entrance level of English of new students is becoming higher. Owing to historical reasons many of the students at that time never learned any English or learned very little

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before being admitted into universities. Therefore the 1980 Syllabus had to start at zero. As a result of the fast improvement of teaching quality in secondary schools, the secondary school leavers today have a much better command of English than before.

- Communication needs have expanded. The government's open door policy has resulted in extensive international exchanges and English has gained increasing importance in the country's modernization endeavour. Scientists and technologists want a much better command of English language in terms of all the four skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking. This has set a much higher demand on ELT at tertiary level.
- New methodological ideas have been spreading in China. The 1980 Syllabus was basically grammatical. The grammar-translation method is a deep-rooted practice in China. In recent years many distinguished British and American applied linguists have visited China on lecture tours. Works of D. Wilkins, H. G. Widdowson, C. Candlin and many others on syllabus design and ELT have been introduced into China. A growing number of English language teachers have come to accept the idea that the communicative approach will contribute much to English teaching. It is now widely agreed that in learning a new language it is necessary to develop one's ability to use the language in addition to learning the formal rules of the language.

In 1982, at a national conference held in Wuhan on college English teaching a decision was reached to design a new college English syllabus. The Ministry of Education appointed a working committee consisting of teachers from Beijing University, Qing Hua University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Chong Qing University, Hua Zhong Institute of Technology, Xian Jiao Tong University, Fudan University, and Nan Kai University. The drafting of the new syllabus was entrusted to the English Department of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Advanced and scientific in approach, practical and flexible in organization, such are the quality requirements the Ministry of Education set for the new syllabus. Within two years from 1982 there were six revised versions of the original draft. The final version of the *College*

English Syllabus was approved and promulgated by the Ministry of Education in February 1985. The new Syllabus has been in effect since September 1985.

DESIGN OF THE SYLLABUS

In designing the new Syllabus the following investigations were carried out to provide an objective and scientific basis for defining the teaching objectives.

English level upon their entrance to college

Two administrations of a sampled test were conducted in 1982 and 1983. The investigation was nationwide. A total number of 3700 freshman students from 37 universities and colleges of 10 cities took the test in the first week upon their entrance. The test comprised sections on vocabulary extent, reading comprehension, grammatical structures, usages, and a Cloze procedure. All the items were of the multiple-choice format. The computer-analyzed test results, showed that the 1982 freshman students had a passive command of 1600 words (Table 1), and the 1983 students increased this number by 150.

Year	Vocabulary (I)		Vocabulary (II)	
	1982	1983	1982	1983
Mean	1660.61	1754.22	1189.94	1414.36
S.D.	546.81	493.02	392.73	338.29
S.E.M.	11.81	10.24	8.45	7.20

Table 1

With this increment in 1985 the secondary school leavers should have a vocabulary extent of 2100 words. If the standard deviation of 500 words remain unchanged, then according to normal distribution 84% of the students by then should have a command of 1600 words upon university entrance, hence the starting point in the new Syllabus in terms of vocabulary extent. The reading comprehension section in the test consisted of three passages with a difficulty level equivalent to the texts in the secondary school textbooks. The test results show that 40% of the students have

acquired a reading speed of 30 wpm. The grammatical structure section consisted of 100 items, 68% of which were included in the *Secondary School English Syllabus*. The average correct answer rate was 50%. The students have acquired a basic knowledge of English grammar as defined in the *Secondary School English Syllabus*. The best results provided a basis for setting the starting point in the *College English Syllabus*.

English level upon the completion of the College English Course

Two administrations of another sampled test were conducted in 1983 and 1984. The investigation was also nationwide. For the purpose of comparison students of the same universities and colleges took the test by the end of their second academic year when they finished their English course of 240–260 classroom hours. The numbers of the students taking the test in the two administrations were 2341 and 1528 respectively. The test consisted of the same sections as the entrance level-ascertaining test but with an additional section on listening comprehension. The test results of the two administrations were not directly comparable because the 1983 and the 1984 students had different English levels upon their entrance. The test results of the 1983 students (Table 2) show that in two years they increased their vocabulary extent by 1200 words.

Year	Vocabulary (I)		Vocabulary (II)	
	1981	1982	1981	1983
Mean	2844	2882	2002	1931

Table 2

In some leading universities the average vocabulary increment was 2000–2700 words. The average reading speed reached 50 wpm. In the listening comprehension section the average correct answer rate was 42% (the listening materials were spoken at a rate of 120 wpm). Seemingly, the students received some basic training in listening. The test results provided a basis for setting the terminal point in the new syllabus.

Needs analysis of English for Science and Technology

In the first half of 1985 the English Research and Information

Centre, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, conducted a social investigation for needs analysis of English for science and technology. Four thousand questionnaires were distributed to university graduates over the years since 1949 now working in different positions nationwide. The investigation items included the types of language skill (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) they need most, their English level, and the use they make of English. A total of 1709 questionnaires were collected, the collection rate being 42.5%. The computer-analyzed results show that scientists and technologists ranked reading ability as their first need. On average they spend 9.69 hours per week (Table 3) on reading English materials, which range according to their importance from professional periodicals, technical manuals, to abstracts, etc. (Table 4).

Hours/ Week	>40	30-40	20-30	10-20	5-10	2-5	<2	0
Answers	10	22	95	263	248	234	152	41
%	0.95	2.1	8.1	24.7	23.3	21.9	14.3	3.9

Table 3

	Patent	Abstracts	Periodicals	Text-books	Tech manuals	Treaties	Others
%	7.4	13.9	29.3	12.3	22.6	11.3	2.7

Table 4

According to their subjective estimation, only 30.89% of the investigatees acquired a practical English reading proficiency before graduation. About 39% of the investigatees spent on average 2.38 years after graduation before they reached this level of proficiency. About 73% of the scientists and technologists say that they need listening and speaking ability in this work, among whom 42% were graduates of the 1950s. Their research and work call for a command of spoken English for — in order to importance — attending foreign specialists' lectures and international technical business negotiations. Some scientists and technologists have expressed a need for writing ability; the writing materials listed are abstracts, technical manuals, papers and letters (Table 5).

Language Activities	Number Of Answers	%
Technical Interpretation	99	8.86
Business Negotiations	249	22.29
Attending Lectures	434	38.85
International Conferences	41	3.67
Meeting Foreign Guests	107	14.95
Others	127	11.37

Table 5

Such large-scale investigations were the first of their kind since the founding of the Republic conducted for college English teaching purposes. The investigation results furnished scientific statistics for setting teaching objectives in the new syllabus.

SOME FEATURES OF THE NEW SYLLABUS

Teaching Objectives

The new syllabus has set three different levels of teaching objectives: proficient reading ability, certain listening and translation ability, and elementary writing and speaking ability. These objectives are predicted by the social needs as evidenced by the investigation results and restricted by such constraints as the students' starting level and the number of total classroom hours available. Both necessity and possibility have been taken into account. In addition, this is the first time since the founding of the PRC that listening, speaking and writing are listed as teaching objectives in a national syllabus.

The new syllabus emphasizes communicative competence. The traditional grammatical syllabus tended to develop linguistic competence. Whatever the method, the students were taken systematically through the grammatical system. The language learning process was reduced to a mere command of a set of grammatical terms and rules. As a result, the students' ability to use the target language is highly limited. Take reading for instance: what the students actually did was word for word reading, carried out at sentence level, and at a very low speed. The reading process thus became finger-pointing deciphering. As Widdowson (1978) has rightly put it, "... the ability to use the target language as a means of communication does not follow as

a necessary consequence of learning the language as a formal system and has to be developed in some way." The new syllabus makes it clear that the ultimate aim of language teaching is to develop communicative competence. The purpose of English teaching is to provide the students with an ability to gain information through English for their professional needs. Reading and listening, as well as speaking and writing, are kinds of communicative activities, a process of interaction, carried out at discourse level. If language is viewed as a means of communication, then what the students should do is to learn to use the language for communication.

A knowledge of the rules of the language, however, is indispensable. In our view linguistic competence and communicative competence are complementary rather than contradictory. Therefore the new Syllabus is neither purely grammatical nor purely functional. It is eclectic. The inclusion of four appendices shows that due attention is given to both linguistic and communicative competence. The vocabulary inventory and the grammatical structures inventory define mainly the teaching content for developing linguistic competence, and the functions/notions inventory and the language skills inventory the content for developing communicative competence.

Common Core

There has been an endless debate in China on whether general English or ESP/EST should be taught to students of science and technology. Broadly speaking, three kinds of English courses have been offered at tertiary level:

- subject matter specific English;
- general English with an emphasis on reading materials for science and technology;
- purely general English.

The majority of universities and colleges belong to the second category. Experience tells us, to develop in the students an ability to gain information for the professional needs through English, a sound basic linguistic grounding is necessary. Emphasis must be laid on the teaching of a common core. By the common core the new syllabus refers to vocabulary items, grammatical structures, functions and general notions common to all registers (including both general English and English for science and technology). At the same time specific features of EST should be included. This refers to the vocabulary items common to most specialized fields,

grammatical structures typical of EST, notions and functions (e.g., definition, classification, etc.) specific to EST but common to most specialized fields, and the ways scientists organize and present their thoughts. This requires authenticity and a wide range of topics of materials to be selected for the coursebook.

The Four Appendices

The four appendices added to the *College English Syllabus* are: a *vocabulary inventory*, a *grammatical structures inventory*, a *functions/notions inventory*, and a *language skills inventory*. They give a detailed description of the content of the college English course. The four appendices are based on the investigation results with reference to published works on syllabus design and methodology. The language items included are selected on the basis of the practical needs of English teaching in universities and colleges of science and technology.

All the items listed in the four appendices are classified into three categories: items the students should have already acquired before their entrance to universities; items to be acquired in Bands 1-4; and items to be acquired in Bands 5-6.

- *The vocabulary inventory* lists 5109 vocabulary items, not including phrases, derivatives, and proper nouns, it has been developed in the following way. First, the one-million word *JDEST Computer Corpus of English Texts for Science and Technology* of Shanghai Jiao Tong University has yielded a list of common words for EST based on computer-analyzed frequencies, coverage and distribution. The list was screened with reference to the *Cambridge Lexicon*, *The Teacher's Word Book Of 10,000 Words*, and *West's A General Service List Of English Words*. Finally, a certain number of political terms necessary for describing life in modern China have been added to the list based on the English language teachers' experience.
- *The grammatical structures inventory* is a revised version of that of the 1980 Syllabus.
- *The functions/notions inventory* is an important component; one of the purposes of language communication is to

exchange information, which is embodied in functions and notions and their relationships realized through language forms. The inventory, based on the practical needs of teaching English in universities and colleges of science and technology, lists 42 items, most of which are functions and general notions of the common core, some of which are functions and notions common to all subject matter areas of science and technology (e.g. comparison, structure, cause and effect, etc.). Under each function some of their linguistic exponents are listed. Since a single function may have many different linguistic realizations, and the choice of the linguistic forms is dependent on many factors such as styles and genres, purpose of communication, and relationships between interlocutors, the list is not exhaustive but exemplary.

- *The language skills inventory* defines the objectives and contents of the teaching of reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. Munby's notion of microskills has been borrowed in an attempt to make a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the four language skills. The microskills which comprise the reading, listening, writing and speaking skills may be divided into two types: those of the language usage type, and those of the language use type. The former refers to microskills at the sentence level, i.e., the usage of the language forms, while the latter refers to microskills at the discourse level, such as gaining the gist of a text, understanding the author's attitude, extracting the main information, etc. The inventory is mainly based on the results of needs analysis, investigations, teachers' experience and the students' English level upon entrance. The percentage of different microskills is listed in Table 6.

Language Skills	Microskills	Language Usage Type	Language Use Type
Reading	70	14 (20%)	56 (80%)
Listening	47	19 (40%)	28 (60%)
Writing	31	6 (19%)	25 (81%)
Speaking	23	7 (30%)	16 (70%)
Total	171	46 (27%)	125 (73%)

Table 6

Qualification and Quantification

One of the ideas in designing the syllabus is to define the teaching objectives quantitatively and qualitatively so as to provide an effective way for the users to organize and evaluate the course. Each teaching band is defined quantitatively in terms of vocabulary extent, reading speed, volume and readability of reading matters, speech rate of listening materials and degree of comprehension. The four appendices define the content and scope of teaching. The quantitative and qualitative analysis in the syllabus cannot be strictly precise because language skills involve a lot of factors, known and unknown. This, however, reflects an effort to put English teaching and evaluation on a scientific and accurate basis.

Modular Structure

The whole English course is divided into six bands. Bands 1-4 (CE1-CE4) are the minimum requirements for all leading universities, Bands 5-6 (CE5-CE6) are advanced requirements. The modular structure, originating from college English teaching practice in China, provides a flexible way of organizing the course and a way of enhancing the students' motivation in learning English. Each band lasts a whole academic term. The freshman students are streamed upon their entrance through a placement test. At the end of each term the students must pass an achievement test to qualify for a higher band. Excellent students are allowed to take the test of a higher band in order to skip over a band with credit units awarded. For Band 4 and Band 6 there will be a national test to certify the students who have qualified. For those students who have failed the placement test upon entrance there are two Preparatory Bands (CEP1-CEP2). Elective advanced English courses are offered to students who have satisfactorily completed Band 6.

Accuracy and Fluency

The new Syllabus has set communicative competence as the ultimate teaching objective. Language communication involves effectiveness, depending on accuracy, and efficiency, depending on fluency of communication. In college English teaching practice today too much attention has been given to developing accuracy

at the expense of fluency. In the teaching of reading, an overemphasis on accuracy usually results in a word-for-word reading habit, an exceptionally low reading speed, and very poor understanding at the discourse level. The syllabus demands both accuracy and fluency, but at present priority should be given to fluency. For practical purposes, requirements on speed, scope, and extent have been set for the different language skills. The teacher-centred classroom teaching should be changed to student-centred activities so that the student may develop fluency through an exposure to massive linguistic data, which finally leads to accuracy in language use. Such is the dialectical relationship between accuracy and fluency.

Language Testing

The syllabus pays attention to language testing, which should provide a scientific, objective, unified and standardized means for the evaluation of the course and the students' English level. The syllabus stipulates for the first time that there should be a national standardized test for Bands 4 and 6 and that the test should evaluate both linguistic and communicative competence — accuracy and fluency. The national standardized test will serve as a unified criterion for evaluating the teaching quality and the students' English level of universities and colleges throughout the country, and for finding out the merits and demerits of the course offered with a view to improving college English teaching.

PROSPECTS

The design of the syllabus, which has enlisted the best efforts of teachers of college English throughout China, is bound to bring about substantial changes in the structure and content of the course as well as its teaching methodology. We are, however, facing a series of difficulties, one of which is teacher training. The new syllabus is eclectic. The functional/notional approach is included in the syllabus as another dimension, complementary to the grammatical/structural syllabus. As the grammar-translation method is deep-rooted in China, the teachers need re-training before they may accept and decide to implement the new syllabus. A growing number of college English teachers, however, are now broadening their methodological outlook in which the ability to

use the target language as a means of communication is the ultimate aim of learning it. New coursebooks are being developed. The national standardized tests are already under preparation. College English teaching in China will be put on a scientific basis.

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Intensive Reading: Some Practical Strategies

Charles Meyer

I was interested in the discussions concerning IR (Fang Ge Xin, J. Utley) from the *ELT Newsletter* No 11 (Summer 1985) and hoped that I might gain useful information for my own teaching in this area.

Both writers have much that is valuable about IR strategies; Utley in particular suggests a Communicative Competence approach which makes a great deal of sense. But I am faced with a situation where neither approach seems very relevant and I would like to describe some of the ways in which I have tackled my situation, in the hope that others may find it useful or worthy of comment.

IR in my institute here in Beijing means examining a specific text from *Advanced Reading Book 1* (FLP 1982). This is a collection of articles and extracts from novels, each of several pages, followed by notes and exercises (comprehension, grammar, translation, essay topics), and it is my task to provide background knowledge and then, to go through paragraph by paragraph, explaining words, idioms and anything else I find necessary. The Chinese co-teacher deals in alternate weeks with the exercises.

IR seems to be placed somewhat in opposition to Extensive Reading and so I was faced with a problem: how to improve student reading in general and at the same time give thorough knowledge of the text as discourse for analysis, all within the polite but firm constraints placed upon me by the teacher in charge of the course.

As a teacher trained in ESL methodology, I am convinced of

the need to treat reading text as meaning first, syntax, etc. second, explaining new words and idioms only insofar as they interfere with that meaning. And so, whilst recognizing that most of the students have come up through a traditional teaching which emphasizes the reverse priorities, I determined to try and integrate the two areas in my teaching.

The first thing I did was throw caution to the winds and teach a session entitled: *How We Read*. As simply and clearly as possible I explained Frank Smith's concepts of Inside-Out as opposed to Outside-In reading, the former of which relegates the reader to a passive interpreter of information whilst the latter makes him an active participant in the reading process — nothing very new to ESL teachers but certainly a novelty to my students and, I suspect, to some Chinese English teachers of the old school.

Secondly, I emphasized the various types of reading of which we must be aware: we read difficult and new area material in a different way than we read material with which we are familiar or which we read purely for entertainment and general knowledge. This means that we need to approach each text in a different way and with different expectations, and that applies equally to the speed of reading and the amount of discourse analysis.

Having set this seemingly novel idea before the students (who, incidentally, are fourth year-students about to go teaching English in Beijing secondary schools) I attempted to implement the concepts in a practical way as applied to the IR texts. This is what I do.

At first I give an historical or social background to the text if it is likely to be strange to the students, using maps and pictures as suitable. Then I present them with lists of new vocabulary and idioms which I feel will impede reading progress (i.e., reading comprehension). Where possible I group the lexemes in a thematic way.

Having hopefully dealt with these problem areas I turn to the text itself, and here I use a variety of approaches. I ask the students to examine the title. "What do you think this text will be about? What sort of things do you think we need to know? What sorts of information would you expect to find in the text?" These questions and comments which have been jotted down on the board will be constantly referred to as we go through the text, and this gives the students a focus for reading, for they are now trying to find answers to general/specific questions.

But how does one actually deal with the text? Does one read

the lot one-self? Does one get the entire class to read (much favoured by Chinese teachers though it allows poor readers to hide behind better ones)? Does one ask individuals? Or should the class just read silently up to a given point? I use a mixture of all of these for purposes of variety and individual notice. So, for some passages I read, emphasizing tone and punctuation markers; for others I ask individuals, or one row, or the entire class; for other passages I require students to read silently. I ask groups to read only because it is the traditional thing to do, and individual reading helps me check gross pronunciation problems (likely to be general) and whether what is being read is really being understood. It is with the silent reading that I use a more Western technique. I select a paragraph to examine and point out its general structure (topic sentence, concentration on one major point). Then I impose a time limit for a first, global understanding of the paragraph, or paragraph group, depending on content, at the end of which time a student is chosen to explain in one sentence the 'guts' or main idea of what he/she has just read. The time limit is such that it is impossible for students to read each word; there is just enough time to skim through for the main points or main idea and in this way I try to encourage the students to read for general meaning rather than understanding all the discrete language units. The time given of course varies according to the nature of the text and with practice the students are able to perform quite well. Words or idioms that I missed initially are dealt with at this stage, and if content presents a problem, we would look more carefully and slowly, using a second reading of that section.

At regular intervals we return to the original questions on the board. "Do we have any answer yet? Having just read one section, what do you think the writer will discuss or describe next?" In this way the essential skill of language prediction is practised, and this is on occasion emphasized by using cloze passages of reading just completed, or perhaps I might ask the students to cover over the last quarter inch of the passage column/line and attempt to predict the full word(s) as they come to the edge.

At the beginning of each new lesson we revise both what we remember having read and also, using definitions, the important new words and idioms.

I also keep an eye on stylistic devices such as how paragraph merges smoothly into another, how dependent clauses are inserted within a main clause, what sorts of words the writer uses

to describe scenes and people, how long sentences are varied with shorter ones, etc. The Chinese co-teacher deals in subsequent sessions with actual exercises.

None of what I have said is very new and is part and parcel of ESL teaching method. But the Chinese tradition at least as practised by most secondary school teachers is heavily grammar-translation oriented, and it would seem that reading and understanding according to the nature of the text is somewhat lacking; practice in these areas therefore appears warranted. Unless students develop the skills of reading for meaning and adapting reading style according to content and purpose, *all* reading will be hampered by the *explication de texte* approach. We need to be aware of this and consciously give students practice in the wider sphere of reading.

P.S. In addition to the above, I have found it useful to cut out interesting and varied stories from the *China Daily* and any other English language magazines or newspapers, pasting each onto a single sheet, under which I write a series of questions, to be read and answered entirely by individual students as a homework exercise. Questions are of the following type:

1. Look at the heading: what do you think the article will be about? (one sentence).
2. Check that you know the meaning of the underlined words.
3. Read the article in no more than X minutes (depending on article). In one sentence write down the main idea of the article.

OR

Read the article in X minutes. Then tick the sentence below which most closely gives the main idea.

4. Read para(s) A (+B) again and then, covering the article, fill in the missing words (i.e., cloze).
5. Match the words/idioms with the appropriate definition (jumbled).

The students seem to like the challenge of these articles.

A Lesson to be Learned: Chinese Approach to Language Learning

Paul Harvey

Chinese learning methods and their relevance to language learning have been the subject of much recent discussion. This article examines some foreign attitudes to these methods and discusses them in the light of a course taught in China. Some learner-based considerations are discussed, and the need for compromise and balance is stressed.

To the outsider China is an enigma: linguistically, socially, culturally, and geographically. Small wonder then that in recent years discussions of Chinese learning strategies have become the great debate, a Peking-style opera in which Bad Element — 'old fashioned' rigid methodology — finally yields to the power of the modern Model Worker, representative of a crusading communicative force intent on stamping out rote learning, memorization, grammatical analysis, and intensive reading: a linguistic Gang of Four to be reviled and 'criticized' in the true Chinese sense of the word.

Among foreign EFL teachers, teacher trainers, and specialists there are a number of commonly held assumptions about Chinese learning methods and their effect on the teaching of English in the People's Republic of China. A number of papers have discussed Chinese learning methods in relation to English as a Foreign Language (e.g., T. Scovel, 1982; Maley, 1982). Briefly, such methods include many of the following features: a concentration on intensive reading as a basis for language study; a preoccupation with the careful, often painstaking examination of grammatical structure and a corresponding lack of attention to

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more communicative skills; the use of memorization and rote learning as a basic acquisition technique; a strong emphasis on the correction of mistakes, both written and oral; a view of literature and a reverence for the printed word which tends to lend to the teaching of non-extensive skills; the use of translation as both a teaching and a learning strategy. There are also other factors, such as the monolithic examination system in China and the perceived role of the teacher, which have to be considered.

What is the attitude of foreign teachers to these methods? It seems to be generally accepted that the skills used by Chinese learners are often not in keeping with modern western views on methodology, particularly as they do not appear to encourage what are now considered to be the more relevant goals of language learning, such as effective oral communication and extensive reading. This is doubtless true in the main, and it can be argued that the attitudes of foreign EFL specialists and teachers, ranging from cynicism to confusion, are justified. At the same time, there is increasing evidence that a more 'communicative' approach is being adopted in some institutions in China (Li Xiaojun, 1984, argues the case convincingly), and a number of eminently sensible suggestions for practical improvements and a more professional balanced approach have been made (e.g., Maley, 1982; Wu Jing-yu, 1982). But it is both unfair and untrue to state that '... the system ... lags behind the rest of the world in almost every aspect of EFL' (Scovel, 1982). My own experience as a teacher trainer indicates that there are many other countries where views and methods are almost equally rigid. More charitably it could be said that the general view that the West 'has got it right' is natural, given the intense study of learning methods and the changes in direction in language teaching methodology over the last decade.

To what extent are these attitudes justified? The following conclusions are based largely on the experience of a three-month course conducted at Tianjin University, one of China's most important science and technology institutions. The course was intended to upgrade the language skills of science lecturers and associate professors from a number of different departments (these ranged from Computer Science to Shipbuilding). It seemed fair to suppose that such a group would use at least some of the methods mentioned above. The participants had a number of aims, including a desire to increase their reading skills and to be able to meet and discuss matters of common interest with foreign

visiting experts. There was a general desire to improve listening and speaking. Knowledge of English varied considerably, and the onus was on us to decide to what extent we wish to improve, adapt, or discourage 'typical' Chinese strategies, given our own views on language learning and those of the participants.

Let us consider, firstly, what it was that the 'students' wished to study and, secondly, how they approached the tasks. Activities such as listening to lectures, note taking, reading academic texts for information, and the writing of summaries of an academic nature were combined with a general desire for conversational practice, for listening comprehension, and for some further insight into grammatical areas which are difficult or confusing for Chinese readers (for example, the English tense system). Being scientists, they often wished to know 'how' and 'why' as well as 'when', and they were uneasy about vague generalization or lack of overt explanation. Many already had excellent reference and library skills and (ostensive) analytical talents which they applied to the learning of grammar. Memorization, the *bête noire* of modern theory, was used, particularly where preparation of items presented but not practised was concerned. Delaying the practice of language items and functions until classes had had time to study and digest the linguistic forms seemed to work extremely well. A highly democratic approach to group work and a propensity for sheer hard work resulted undeniably in a considerable degree of success. An interesting gap early on between intellectual and linguistic abilities gradually narrowed as the course progressed, and the logical capabilities of people used to dealing with mathematical and scientific questions became more easily expressible in English. There was also a great willingness to undertake a variety of activities used in western teaching, especially if the rationale was explained to them. There were occasional stumbling blocks ('I do not like to guess — I am a mathematician', remarked one student in connection with an authentic listening task), but these were surmounted in a remarkably good-humoured way, and, given the participants' background and situation, they often seemed to us to be very reasonable responses.

Many of the strategies for study fitted into the categories examined at the beginning of this article. There was a considerable amount of careful, painstaking translation of texts; a tendency to memorize dialogues, whether this was required or not; a great interest in grammatical analysis; a strong desire to be

corrected whenever a mistake occurred; and the prospect of even informal 'tests' threw everyone into a panic. There was, however, a feeling that people were not being called upon to abandon their learning strategies but rather to examine them and pick and choose those which seemed relevant to the tasks to be undertaken.

A combination of what learners feel is the best way of approaching language learning, and more than a slight mistrust of the value of what could be called the 'Party Line' in EFL — whatever it might be at any particular time — makes it a worthwhile task to consider the success or failure of individual and group Chinese language-learning methods. In relation to the Tianjin course, on a general level these involved discussion of the differences between western and oriental study methods and emphases, an attempt to label techniques 'constructive' or 'not-constructive' for language learning and use, and establishing a basic criterion of progress in terms of what people could do at the end of the course that they had been unable, or had found difficult to do at the beginning, and analyzing how such progress had been achieved.

One particular area — the desire to understand the grammatical system — provided an interesting insight. On the Tianjin course we were constantly asked to explain points of grammar which caused confusion. The interest, however, appeared to be more constructive than is often said to be the case; it was seen as a very necessary part of an intensive language course. 'We would like to know what happens, because if we understand the system we can use English more efficiently' was one comment. It was certainly the case that points which were explained were not only remembered but also used by those who had asked the questions. As I said above, presumably scientists want to know *how* and *why*, as well as *what* and *when*. But whatever the discipline of the learner, telling people what happens in English can hardly be considered irrelevant or a waste of time when they go away and study what has been said and attempt to use it in future communication. It was also clear that the 'I'm not going to tell you because these questions are not important' response was not a success, as students felt at best cheated and at worst insulted for having asked. Explaining points meant that when something which genuinely did not matter came up, everyone was prepared to accept the teacher's judgement on the matter. It is not insignificant that Leech and Svartvik's

Communicative Grammar of English was one of the most popular books we took with us, largely because it provided clear, well-organized examples of contemporary spoken English. It is also interesting to ask why wanting to know the underlying system should be considered such an old-fashioned primitive thing, if it is also combined with usage and practice. Understanding the grammatical framework of a language is extremely important for some learners, often especially so for speakers of very different languages. Only when it becomes a substitute for *using* the language does grammar lose its point. Certainly, ignoring this particular angle would have meant losing face as language teachers, and missing some excellent opportunities for genuine language practice. This is one area where having expatriate teachers with little knowledge of language or language teaching had done more harm than good in China.

The emphasis is, perhaps, that the needs and skills of the learner cannot be ignored. The point politely stressed by Wu Jing-yu (1982) is worth repeating: 'The teacher ought to have an analytical attitude, an open mind, and should be ready to use reasoning and persuasion with a lot of patience.' In this context there are a number of points which should be considered by anyone involved in TEFL in China:

1. Chinese learning methods cannot simply be dismissed as 'primitive', 'old-fashioned', or 'misguided'. There are a number of obvious historical, pedagogical, and psychological reasons for them.
2. What might be called 'traditional' methods and skills are not fundamentally or necessarily unworkable alongside modern EFL teaching methods. The idea that the two are mutually exclusive is absurd.
3. EFL in China needs western experience and expertise, not western dogma. Nor — in language teaching — does the People's Republic really need or benefit from expatriate professors of literature. There is no room here to consider the bureaucratic problems of teacher recruitment (Maley, 1982 makes the point concisely), but the idea needs re-stressing.
4. More investigation needs to be made into learner-centred

behaviour in language teaching. Work on needs analysis and course development is of basic importance if time and talent is not to be wasted.

5. The 'We've got it right' attitude is a waste of time in China. Even if it is true, nobody wants to hear it, except possibly those who have little or nothing to do with teaching.

China's Modernization programme involves a great deal of language planning and development, teacher training and recruitment, the development of ESP/EST courses and the training of people who are to work and study outside China. English will have an increasingly important role as a foreign language, and the Great Debate on conflicting methodologies will no doubt continue. A balanced approach and the use of existing potential both have a fundamental part to play in the development of language teaching in the People's Republic.

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Note

1. As Thomas Scovel points out, if these methods are used in prestigious universities and institutions in China cities, it can logically be assumed that outside these cities learning methods are more rigid and traditional.

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A Theoretically Based Evaluation of Intensive Reading

Roger Everett

INTRODUCTION

Visit a university or college language class, or tune into a television language course and you will likely encounter the method of instruction commonly called Intensive Reading (IR). It is easy to understand why Alistair Pennycook claims that "... (IR) remains at the heart of most language teaching curricula at tertiary level" (Pennycook, 1987). In many programs, IR is considered to be the most appropriate manner of developing students' language ability. If there are other courses in the programme, they are typically considered supplementary and of relatively less importance in developing language ability. The implication, then, is that IR is the method or technique which best provides the conditions essential to the development of language ability. My claim here, however, is that IR fails to provide the conditions related to input, feedback and practice which are necessary if language acquisition is to occur.

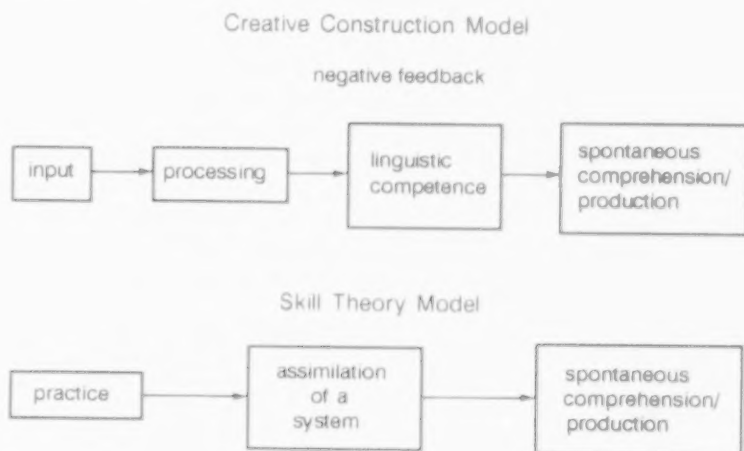
The inherent problem with evaluating a method so culturally bound as IR by someone who is not a member of that culture is that it is very easy to misunderstand the degree to which methodology may be culturally bound (Pennycook, 1987). It is for this very reason that I have chosen to base my evaluation on language acquisition theory which seeks to isolate the universal processes of acquisition which are not culturally bound. The assumption here is that the basic processes of acquisition and

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mechanisms of the mind are the same across all cultures. Therefore, while cultural suitability is of great importance in evaluating a method, it is secondary to questions of whether the method is suited to the acquisition processes of the mind and becomes an issue only after the latter has been established.

CRITERIA

The first step in making an evaluation is to establish the criteria on which the judgement is to be made. Clearly, it would be a simple matter to manufacture a language acquisition theory to discredit IR. To say that such an evaluation would be of questionable value, would be an understatement. Instead, this evaluation is based on the two dominant models of language acquisition currently accepted, the Creative Construction Model and the Skill Theory Model. They can be diagrammed as follows (Littlewood, 1984):



At first glance, the two models appear very different in their claims to what leads to the development of a language system, and in fact they are. It does not necessarily follow though they are contradictory. A closer examination reveals that they are actually complementary. The Creative Construction Model explains the development of linguistic competence (the linguistic structure within the mind). Skill theory on the other hand explains the

development of the larger system called language (or communication), of which linguistic competence is but one component.

INTENSIVE READING

IR is, in general sense, what its name implies, a careful scrutiny of a text. In common practice that means the students are given a short text (1 to 3 pages), which the teacher first reads out loud to the students. The reading is followed by the analysis, which revolves around two goals. One is the expansion of the students' vocabulary knowledge, carried out by the translation and/or paraphrasing of new words and phrases, and by giving examples. The other goal is the expansion of the students' grammatical knowledge, carried out by the explanation, both in Chinese and the target language, of the new grammatical points, which are typically the lexical or semantic constraints of new words. In actual practice, IR courses sometimes include other activities that deviate from the basic described above. It might be said though that the degree to which actual practice deviates from the basic form, to that same degree, the methods being used can no longer be considered IR.

EVALUATION

Input is the primary causative factor in the Creative Construction Model, and provides a good starting point in the evaluation of IR. There are two issues related to input which have bearing on this evaluation. The first is the issue of what quantity of appropriate input is necessary for the acquisition to occur. The Creative Construction Model claims that the smaller the amount of appropriate input the learner receives, the less he/she will acquire, and the larger the amount that he/she receives, the more he/she will acquire. The amount of input necessary thus depends on what results are desired. If one unit of input results in one unit of acquisition, and twenty units of acquisition are desired, the learner must be provided with twenty units of input. When we look at IR with this in mind and see that students receive one to three pages of input per week over a three to four hour period (160 hours per year), and compare that with Klein's conservative estimate that

children receive 9,100 hours of language exposure during their first 5 years (Klein, 1986), a great gap in the number of hours of language exposure is evident. It seems possible that if quantity of acquisition is important, a method which provides a relatively small amount of input such as IR, would be of little value.

The second issue related to input is the matter of what constitutes appropriate input. Modern society lays out fairly definite guidelines on this issue. According to Krashen, appropriate input is " $i+1$ " where i is the learner's level of current competence and " $i+1$ " is a little beyond his/her competence, but comprehensible. At the level " $i+1$ " acquisition occurs, but if input is above that level, acquisition will not occur. This phenomenon can be explained by theories related to the information-processing capacities of the mind, which claim that humans are "... limited capacity processors ..." and, therefore, are not able to process input more complex than " $i+1$ " (McLaughlin, *et al.*, 1983). VanPatten (1984) explains this phenomenon by positing two strategies, the communicative strategy and the learning strategy, which are used by language learners. When input is at an appropriate level of complexity, the learner divides his/her attention between the two strategies. When the input is too complex, whether for linguistic or conceptual reasons, all the learner's attentional capacity is expended on the seeking of meaning (the communicative strategy) and no attentional capacity remains to be allocated to the learning strategy. Input then must be within the learner's range of comprehensibility, and somewhat below the upper limit of his/her comprehensibility to allow for some attentional capacity to be assigned to learning.

Given these assumptions concerning the nature of input, it seems likely that IR fails to provide input at an appropriate level. It seems likely for two reasons. One is the very fact that instructors can, and do, spend three to four hours giving detailed lexical and grammatical descriptions of a one to three page text, suggesting that the text is of relatively great complexity. Another is that the teachers themselves frequently have difficulty understanding the text both conceptually and linguistically. If the texts are beyond the teachers' range of comprehensibility, they are most likely to be beyond the range of their students.

In addition to appropriate input at an acceptable rate, the most widely accepted form of the Creative Construction Model also requires negative feedback. Unlike input which expands the

learner's competence, or grammar, negative input plays a constraining role by setting parameters on the learner's grammar and preventing the development of over-inclusive grammar (Schachter, 1985). Schachter has defined negative feedback as "explicit correction" where the speaker is told "right" or "wrong" and given the correct form, "confirmation checks" where the listener asks a yes/no question such as, "Did you say tall?", and "clarification requests" where the speaker must rephrase what he/she has said or supply additional information. A fourth type of negative input is "unrecognized failure to understand". The issue of negative feedback boils down to the simple view that learners need opportunities to employ the language system they are developing in order to test their system and receive feedback that can be used to revise or discard part of the system that are wrong. This implies that not only do learners need feedback, but feedback must be based on language generated directly by the learner's own system. These conditions can only be met in a truly communicative situation. IR fails on both counts to provide what is necessary. For most of class time, the students are nothing more than passive receptors of grammatical, lexical, and semantic descriptions, and in rare cases where students do receive feedback, it is typically limited to explicit correction on exercises which do not elicit output representative of the learner's language system.

The third condition essential to the language acquisition process is not from the Creative Construction Model, as the first two were, but from the Skill Theory Model. This latter model claims that the development of a language system involves the automaticization of tasks (McLaughlin, 1983) and the unitization of tasks (Brown, 1986). The causative factor in the development of automaticity and unitization is practice. As a learner receives practice in carrying out a task, the numerous subtasks become progressively more automatic and more efficiently unitized. There are two implications of this model. One is that the learner will develop skill only in the task he/she practises. In part, because such task consists, at least partially, of different subtasks, and also because once subtasks are unitized they are difficult to reorganize or separate. The other implication is that if the goal of the task, or the task itself, is altered, the performer's skill will be inhibited, even to the degree that he/she may no longer be able to carry out the task. An example would be a student who can consistently score well on grammar exercises, but who exhibits a lack of

grammaticality when writing a composition. The student has developed skill on one task, but cannot perform skilfully on another task that is significantly different in nature. He or she must develop skill in carrying out the new task, although skill in a similar task can speed up the time required to develop skill in the new task. If we look at IR, there is little doubt that the students develop a great deal of skill on a number of tasks which might possibly include translating sentences, understanding grammatical and lexical descriptions, paraphrasing words and doing grammar exercises. The problem is that these tasks are quite different from what language use consists of outside of the IR classroom. IR students fail to get practice in, and, therefore, fail to develop skills in the tasks related to understanding and communicating both verbally and in written form, tasks normally equated with language skill.

CONCLUSION

The two dominant models of language acquisition, the Creative Construction Model and the Skill Theory Model, in their most general and easily acceptable forms, claim that in order to acquire a language system a learner must have:

- a sufficient quantity of input at a suitable level of complexity in order to develop linguistic competence;
- the opportunity to test his/her language system in a situation where he/she can receive feedback; and
- opportunity to practise the tasks in which he/she must develop skills, which in this case means in communicating and understanding language in both written and verbal forms.

A casual look at IR seems that it may fail to provide:

- a sufficient quantity of input at a suitable level of complexity;
- an opportunity for students to test their language systems and receive feedback; and
- opportunities for students to develop skills in the tasks which are part of a language system.

While this may seem a very harsh criticism of IR, the intention here is not to imply that IR is completely without value. In fact, it could play a useful role in the processing aspect of the language acquisition process by helping students to understand both the generalizations and idiosyncrasies of the target language, thereby helping them to process input more efficiently and develop language competence more quickly.

Up to this point, I have made no mention of the supporters of IR or their reasons for supporting IR, primarily because, just as with trial, the burden of proof lies with the prosecution. In this case, the prosecution has laid out its case, and the evidence of modern linguistic and psychological theory weighs heavily against IR as a method sufficient to bring about language acquisition. Under such circumstances, the burden of proof now switches to the defence to explain why they maintain IR as the primary method of language instruction, and to provide evidence to support their statements.

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CHAPTER 5.9

A Joint Venture in Guangzhou

John Barnes

Established in Macau but with a presence in Hong Kong, the University of East Asia (UEA) has always had as a major aim the extension of its educational sphere of influence northwards, to serve as a resource for the Pearl River and Guangdong Province areas. And in early 1984, in furtherance of that policy, it took the decision to establish some form of English language course within China. Wide as the proposal was, at the time it made very good sense; Deng Xiao-ping's 'open door' policy was in full swing, and trade and tourism — channelled largely through Hong Kong and Macau — were increasing. These developments, coupled with China's overall plans for modernization, fuelled an already vast need for education in general and for English language in particular. To meet some part of that need, the University's first task was obviously to focus the primary initiative narrowly enough to make it both realistic and productive.

BACKGROUND

For reasons of a practical kind, Guangzhou was identified as the most suitable site for the programme, and its working *adult* population as the target audience and, specifically, those who had completed secondary school but had been denied the opportunity

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of entering tertiary education. Even with that limitation, the pool of potential students was enormous; and according to press estimates it was being swollen by some 30,000 new school-leavers each year. Not all, of course, would have any interest in pursuing their education, and fewer still in limiting that pursuit to improving their abilities in English. But a sizeable percentage would remain all the same, and as it turned out virtually all the students we have enrolled since then have shared one or both of the following aims: to improve a command of English that was already proving inadequate to work-related demands, or simply to acquire a further-education qualification of any kind that would lead to job preferment (and mobility) and thus social and financial advancement. And if such aims seem to be obvious, universal ones common to adult students in any country, it is worth remembering that they will be very much sharpened in societies of the Chinese sort, where employment opportunities are strictly controlled and minute gradations of status are of great social importance.

With the putative student body now limited to working adults, one of two possible course types — or 'delivery systems' in this case — was entailed: either a conventional part-time course, classroom-based and involving regular attendance at some kind of evening institute, or a self-study system based on distance-education models. At the time, the first of these functions was being carried out by the 'Evening University' programmes and the second by the 'Television University', among many others, but whatever the respective merits of these institutions were there was little doubt that UEA had no real choice in the matter: the distance-teaching option was the only one likely to be viable. For a foreign agency like UEA to install and operate a direct-teaching operation, even in the unlikely event that the authorities were to permit it in the first place, there would need to exist in China a degree of official compliance and cooperation, and a range of practical facilities, which did not seem at all likely to be available in Guangzhou five years ago. Nor do they now.

Distance education of the sort we now had in mind was innovative enough in the Chinese context, but there were several other unfamiliar features we proposed to incorporate in the programme. The first of these, and in our eyes still among the most important, was the principle of open entry, interpreted as the ability of anyone with a minimum secondary education to enrol in the programme without further precondition of any kind, notably without formal examinations. A second, and again very

important, feature, which to our knowledge still makes the programme unique in China was that it would thus be a single-subject 'Diploma in English'. Another feature was to be the introduction of a modern (at that time largely Western) communicative approach to the learning of English. Further, the 'English' to be aimed at would be practical, immediately available for use, and very different from the literary and culturally loaded material of the standard syllabus. Towards the end of the course it would be focused on the specific occupational areas which the majority of students identified as germane to their own situations.

At this point in the planning process it became clear that we could not set up or operate a programme in China, even a distance one, without a Chinese partner, and a joint venture was therefore established between UEA and South China Normal University (SCNU) in Guangzhou in accordance with an earlier general agreement on wider academic cooperation between the two institutions. The term 'joint venture' in the jargon of commercial China trade typically refers to an operation where outside capital and perhaps know-how is combined with personnel resources and premises on the mainland to set up a business concern whose profits will be shared by both parties. It is an appropriate enough label for the forms of cooperation that have grown up between the two universities, though the profit motive natural to a business operation is quite absent here. It was never intended that the programme should generate more than the funds necessary to cover costs, and tuition fees have always been kept as low as possible. By way of illustration (there can be no direct comparison) a similar course at the new Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong currently costs about four times more.

Through discussion with our new colleagues at SCNU, a basic format for the course was arrived at. Essentially it was to consist of an extensive range of print and audio material either derived from outside sources or specially prepared by UEA, with administrative and tutorial support provided by SCNU. Extending over a full three years, the course would take as its starting point the standard officially required of secondary school leavers:

'A working knowledge of 1200 frequent words, of elementary structures and usage, and of the English sound system; an ability to understand classroom English, to carry on conversations on a limited number of everyday subjects, and to read easy English readers'.

The exit standard was referenced to two external norms: the second-year undergraduate level at Chinese universities, as determined by the requirements of the 'English teaching syllabus for first and second year students of English' issued by the then Ministry of Education in Beijing (now the State Education Commission), and the pass-level required by the First Certificate in English of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. In terms of textbook series, the exit standard related to the end of the 'Intermediate' phase, a fact which was to be of some importance later. But it was the first of these three parallelisms that really mattered: crucial to the programme from the beginning was the validation of the course by the authorities, both central (Ministry of Education in Beijing) and provincial (Guangdong Board of Higher Education), and the eventual state recognition of the final diploma. The pursuit of this validation involved the same lengthy and labyrinthine progress through the bureaucratic maze that seems typical of all joint ventures, but eventually it was successful. Full recognition was first put unequivocally into writing more than a year after the programme began, when there had been time for considerable monitoring and observation, but there is no doubt that this final state accreditation was a major achievement.

These, then, were the broad outlines within which the original initiative was to be developed. A more detailed account of what actually happened, how the course and its systems evolved, is set out below, followed by a summary of the whole enterprise so far.

THE COURSE ITSELF

The core texts for the course, one for each of the three years, are drawn from Alexander's *Mainline* series. And if this immediately raises eyebrows, on the grounds — even if a classroom text is admitted at all — that there are numerous other worthy coursebooks available which approach much more closely the communicative ideals universally espoused in the West, there are certain points relating to our particular role in the Chinese context that need to be firmly put.

Firstly, it is fair to say that most Chinese students, and certainly those entering a course of our type, appear linguistically and pedagogically naive, to the point that the notion of a course that did not base itself on a central text would be very hard to

accept. There are obvious links here to the Chinese student's propensity for rote learning, memorization of model texts, intensive study of every detail on every page and so on.

Secondly, given that some textbooks had to be prescribed from the outset, *Mainline* proved to have significant advantages of an operational or administrative kind: the older parent series, *New Concept English*, was (and still is) widely used in China, while *Mainline* itself was due for adoption as the core text for SCNU's own 'Evening University' courses. These two facts gave comfort to intending students and, more importantly perhaps, reassurance to the authorities that when it came to recognition of our programme there was a clear parallelism with others already blessed by the official sanction that is so vital to any enterprise in China. Moreover, the publishers of both series, Longman, maintain a large office in Hong Kong, and are themselves interested in developing contacts within China.

The series also has features within it that make it especially suitable for our purposes. It is specifically intended for adult learners who are studying in their own country; it assumes little or no knowledge of (or interest in) the socio-cultural background of English-speaking countries and makes no attempt to inculcate it, although the variety of English dealt with in the text is firmly based on British usage. The guiding principle is to enable students to communicate on an everyday level either with other non-native users of English or with native speakers, in this way rejecting the conventional approach whereby native speakers communicate with each other against their own 'home' background, often in a thoroughly baffling way. The books are tightly organized and very well indexed, with each successive lesson or unit following an identical format — features of importance in self-access modes of learning. Finally, after some revision towards a more functional/notional approach to syllabus design the series now reflects a doctrinal position lying appropriately at a point of transition from ancient to modern.

From the full series of six, three texts are used in the programme, one per year: *Mainline Progress A*, *Progress B* and *Skills A*. Since each consists of thirty units, fifteen are studied per semester, the final breakdown being three units spread over four weeks' work — involving, we calculate, some fifty hours of private study each month. And if this seems a tall order, bearing in mind that the students are all in full-time employment, it is one that they seem so far to have met without complaint. (Perhaps this

endorses another view of the Chinese student archetype, that he is nothing if not diligent.)

Important as they are, however, the *Mainline* books do not themselves form more than the core of the programme. Accompanying them are six *Student's Guides* and forty-eight cassette tapes, and these are the main exponents of the self-instructional process and of factors appropriate to the Chinese (Cantonese) context. Produced and published by UEA Press Ltd, and each about 200 pages long, these *Guides* are intended to reinforce, complement, expand and at times modify the content of the corresponding *Mainline* units, in ways that

- (a) facilitate the programme's self-instructional aims;
- (b) introduce where appropriate a cultural context familiar to the student, together with explanatory material in Chinese;
- (c) require of the student, in the various tasks that he is set by the *Guide*, either independent reactions or interaction within a peer group; and
- (d) completely integrate the audiotape 'accompaniment'.

The explanatory Chinese material consists of two types: printed matter within the *Student's Guide*, largely translations of key items in rubrics (simplified characters are used); and more discursive explanations on the tape. For both we are indebted to Madam Peidi Zheng, a well-known voice on Beijing radio.

In addition to working through the core text, *Student's Guide* and taped material, students are also required to attend, in groups of about twenty, a monthly contact session with a tutor. All tutors, and over forty have so far worked on the programme, are drawn from the staff of the Foreign Language Department at SCNU. The word 'class' is avoided, because the purpose of the monthly meetings is essentially advisory rather than informative. The tutor's task as we see it, and as we have tried, not always successfully, to shape it, is threefold: to deal with any major problems that surface in the context of the previous month's work; to introduce the next month's assignments, highlighting certain topics and tasks as especially important; and at a more personal level to check individual progress and help students with any study-related areas of difficulty. What we constantly urge the tutors not to do is attempt an orthodox class, where every item is 'taught', every answer provided, and every piece of written or oral work marked. Setting the tutors against such procedures runs

directly counter to long and deeply held beliefs on both sides about the teacher-student relationship and about what constitutes a proper classroom lesson. This is an area where we have not, so far at least, been as successful as we had hoped in effecting real changes in attitudes — although Byron and Macmillan take a generally more optimistic view of what can be achieved with the cooperation of teachers (Chapter 5.10).

Two other components of the course remain to be described. The first consists of a system of simplified readers operated in a library mode, whereby each student has the use of a different book for every month of his course and is able to retain the last one he reads each semester as his own property. This may not seem especially significant, but in fact it is clear that students put a very high value on actually keeping books of their own, to the point where one title — rather thinner than its fellows — had to be withdrawn entirely on the grounds that nobody wanted to be the one to retain it when more substantial items were available.

The final component, a system of 'partnering', was built into the original design to counter in some measure the obvious objection that a course seeking to be 'communicative' will find it difficult to be so in distance-education circumstances where direct communicative practice is naturally limited. This is a point that has been put to us by ELT colleagues, but its validity is in our view greatly diminished if 'communicative' is taken to apply to an *approach* rather than to a *methodology*, as the originators of the whole concept have always insisted it should be. In this context, then, the original design sought to make a virtue of a necessity by introducing a system whereby every student would be paired from the beginning with another in the same group, preferably one who lived in the same neighbourhood or was employed in the same work-unit. This assumption, that students would always have someone to interact with as they worked through the material each month, is embodied in the numerous instructions, tasks and suggestions for pair or group work that appear in the *Student's Guides* and their associated tapes.

In the event, the partnering system has not been wholly successful but for reasons that have nothing to do with its potential value as one component in an integrated pattern of distance language-teaching. It is practical circumstances that have intervened. Firstly, most people in Guangzhou find it almost impossible to secure the space and the privacy, either at their places of work or at home, that would enable them to meet

regularly and engage in some kind of useful language-learning activity. Secondly, very few telephones are available, at least to the general run of students, and the postal service does not seem of much use to them either. This lack of access to reliable public services has a further effect, in that it is very difficult for a student to maintain contact with his tutor during the working month (that is between one face-to-face session and the next), whereas in places like Hong Kong such access can be taken for granted.

Alongside the various course components runs a complex, though fairly orthodox, evaluation process. It consists of formal written and oral tests at the end of each semester complemented by regular continuous-assessment procedures. The system as a whole was designed by the UEA team, though not without some give-and-take on both sides, since evaluation is a somewhat contentious issue in China, and we were at the time seeking official recognition of the programme's exit standards and thus of its final diploma.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

We can now look back over five years of development. The first intake, of about 1000 students began the course in 1985, and well over 600 graduated in the summer of 1988. That such a high proportion survived is a great tribute to the students concerned, since it is obvious that the combination of work and study demanded by distance programmes of this kind is bound to lead to problems, not all by any means academic ones. Four further intakes have since been enrolled, and the signs are that the dropout rates will be significantly lower again.

The print and audio materials, textbooks apart, have all gone through several processes of amendment and revision since the first pilot versions were issued, in response to criticisms and suggestions from tutors and students. Feedback has been constantly solicited from both quarters, and we are hopeful now that what appears to be a natural Chinese reluctance towards public and explicit commentary on such matters has at last been overcome. The distance factor operates to the disadvantage of the course designer and planner, in that he can never really observe the actual learning process himself but must hypothesize from what comments and reactions he can gather at second or third hand.

Since the beginning tutors have been provided with a series of teaching-notes, keys, marking-schemes and other support materials, all of which are now being revised and collated so that they can be issued in the form of a handbook to all new and existing tutors on the programme. We have found that our Chinese colleagues are conscientious to a degree in the preparation of their teaching and will devote a great deal of effort to ensure that they are in total command of the material, down to the minutest detail that most of their Western counterparts would consider either dispensable or downright irrelevant. In this way, they arm themselves in advance against any possible infringement of their position that failure to answer a student's question would entail, for no teacher in a Chinese classroom can expect to evade or postpone a question, much less dismiss it as unimportant or irrelevant.

This tendency — which explains the great popularity of the support materials we provide as well as the frequent requests for their expansion — has of course more than one side to it. Though it is hard to fault a teacher who prepares so exhaustively, one may doubt whether his motives are entirely pure, in the sense that he may actually be preparing to acquiesce in classroom procedures that he knows to be inefficient and unprofitable to either party — and which, moreover, run counter to the notions of student autonomy and student-centred learning that underlie the entire course. But then, particularly among older teachers, there will be memories of the appalling way their profession was treated during the Cultural Revolution, and some subsequent reluctance to embrace unfamiliar approaches. We have found such older teachers, as well as the younger people who are succeeding them, to be worthy of the utmost admiration and respect for the job they do in often extremely onerous circumstances. And none more worthy than the two coordinators, Professors Li Jiming and Ho Hong Ju, who have acted not only as organizers and controllers in Guangzhou, but also as its apologists and, on occasions, its defenders.

Admission

There is a further aspect of the programme's development so far that needs to be discussed, and that is the largely administrative matter of the criteria that govern admission to the first semester. *Joint Open Diploma Course in English* was the original title

(rendered in Chinese as English Speciality after the Pattern of the Open University), and it is only the 'Open' element that has been called into question. At the time of the first intake in 1985, the sole criterion for admission was the completion of a normal secondary-school education, and as a result there was an enormous response to the initial and fairly low-key announcement. In retrospect, it seems likely that the authorities did not act quickly enough to block a loophole in their established procedures, but they had certainly done so by the next enrolment period a year later. No student was allowed to enter a course to which a state-recognized diploma was attached without first passing the national matriculation examination, held in May of each year and involving six different subjects. The argument that adults who had been out of formal education for many years could not fairly be expected to submit themselves to such an examination, and that in any case five of its six components were irrelevant to a single-subject course such as ours, had no effect whatever.

As a result of the new stipulation, enrolment fell sharply and remained at a level of less than 200 for each of the intervening two intake periods, with consequent inefficient use of potential resources and a failure to take advantage of economies of scale, which may have denied opportunities to hundreds of people. One odd result of this policy of forcing a very different structure into the common mould of conventional tertiary education was that about half of the entrants turned out to be secondary-school leavers, those who had been denied a place at an ordinary full-time institution — not at all the market the course was designed for. Finally, after many representations at different levels over the past three years, it has now been declared that applicants for admission to the *Joint Open Diploma Course* will only be obliged in future to take the English section of the national examinations, and not the other five. In this way, the description 'Open' can again be justified, and we expect for future intakes that the original pattern of enrolment will reassert itself.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

To bring this account finally up to date, mention must be made of the 'events' of May and June 1989. From all accounts, the repercussions in Guangzhou were relatively slight — Guangdong

is a long way from Beijing, and prides itself on the fact — and despite some disturbance to the routines at SCNU itself our own operation appeared to suffer not at all. Certainly, there was no interruption to the regular programme, and attendance at weekend meetings was as full as ever.

Looking to the future, it seems that the job in Guangzhou is now largely done, and SCNU can quite safely be left to continue the expansion of the *Joint Open Diploma Course* itself, with UEA holding no more than an occasional monitoring or advisory role. But there are clearly great opportunities for diversification to other parts of China, now that the programme has proved itself in Guangzhou as a cheap and effective means to upgrade a vital area of the country's educational structure and has secured a high level of commitment from the authorities. We continue to hope that such initiatives will be pursued. In mid-1988 the East Asia Open Institute (EAOI) was established as a separate entity but as an affiliate of UEA to operate in the running of courses for countries outside Macau, China among them. Hopefully, the new EAOI will enable us to apply all the lessons we have learnt in Guangzhou operation elsewhere in China.

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The Role of the Language Teacher in Distance Education

Shelagh Byron and Matthew Macmillan

This paper reflects on a specific area of difficulty experienced during the early stages of the distance-learning *Joint Open Diploma Course in English*, operated in Guangzhou by the University of East Asia and the South China Normal University (Chapter 5.9) — where Chinese teachers of English were required to move away from a traditional view that saw the language learning process as teacher-centred and, instead, to adjust to a distance-education environment calling for a more communicative approach that was necessarily oriented mainly towards the student.

In the Chinese context, it was only to be expected that teachers who were traditional in their approach would find difficulty in adjusting to the role of tutor in self-learning circumstances and that, importantly, students accustomed to being taught in traditional ways would have expectations regarding the role of learner that would add to the tutors' difficulties.

Traditionally, the language teacher's role has been *authoritative*. He plays that role in several guises — as military commander, as high priest, as judge and as executioner.

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As *military commander* he instigates and directs activity with considerable authority, following the established conventions regarding pedagogic tactics and strategy. Like a general he believes that students can only be motivated by his authority; he expects them to be disciplined and obedient, and is prepared, if necessary, to impose his will upon them — on the grounds that 'he knows best'. This concept is demonstrated in the Guangzhou classroom by, for example, the way adult students will respectfully stand up to address or answer the teacher in what is perhaps rather welcome reaffirmation of teacher authority and classroom protocol. On the more negative side, however, it may result in a passive attitude on the students' part, frustrating to communicatively minded teachers worldwide, where, for example, students expect the teacher to make them talk, even to the extent of nominating each speaker, and thereby severely limit the opportunity for practice of such discourse features as turn-taking or sequencing. Similarly, in this role the teacher will initiate almost all class activities, with perhaps only a token 'Any questions?' to mark the transition from one activity to another, rather than a genuine alternation in interactional patterns.

As *high priest* the teacher expects to have the students' respect for his superior wisdom, and recognizes that he is considered to be the fount of all knowledge — able to produce on demand the answer to any (preferably grammatical) question. As Li Xiaojun (1984) observes of traditional study methods:

"In China when people say you have 'learnt an English lesson', they generally mean you have looked up and memorised every single word, and translated and analysed grammatically every sentence in it."

This view of learning and of the teacher's role has three general and unfortunate consequences. It militates against the use of a problem-solving approach in the classroom; it puts teachers in the unenviable position of having to 'know everything'; and it encourages an often uncritical dependence on any guru whose word may be taken as law. The effects in China have been to make teachers very vulnerable to, in particular, the well-motivated and enthusiastic student who will expect immediate in-depth answers to his questions, however irrelevant, inconvenient or inappropriate they may be. We have seen teachers microscopically

studying the small print in illustrations to the text in order to anticipate and prepare for just such questions where, in other teaching circumstances, the student might be commended for his diligence but referred to an alternative, non-human resource like an encyclopedia or dictionary. This obligation to provide instant and specific answers has led to a focus on the end product, and a general underestimation of that process of learning where the effort involved in finding out, processing or recalling information leads to greater memorability. Focus on 'the right answer', even to open-ended questions, means that teachers want answer keys to protect their own security; and, embarrassingly, when in doubt they are only too ready to bestow the mantle of high priest on 'foreign experts' and undervalue local experience and expertise.

As *judge*, therefore, the teacher is looked to for the often arbitrary imposition of notions of right and wrong — even with regard to written exercises where a range of answers with varying degrees of acceptability is possible. In the past, students have expected, even demanded, that the teacher literally correct every written error and not merely point to the existence of a problem, but with little indication of the success or otherwise of the writing in terms of its communicative function. In a completion exercise, for example, the sentence 'When I was ten, the headmaster *got married*' is judged deviant and therefore wrong, whereas the sentence 'When I was ten, the headmaster *rewarded me a prize*' will probably be considered correct, with focus on the all-important score rather than the possibility of differing criteria for evaluation. In the same way, as Li Xiaojun again observes, such expectations on the student's part are reinforced by classroom procedures:

"In pattern drills students are often required to give only one form of response, the only 'correct' one . . . There is no freedom, no choice, no unpredictability in this."

It is interesting in the context of the English Diploma programme that during an early stage of the course a rival approach — though since, along with its proponent, quite discredited within the department — competed for the tutors' methodological loyalty by advocating that the same proportion of class-time be given to formal written tests as to actual teaching.

And as *executioner* the teacher has, if not power of life or death over his students, at least a major influence over success or failure, with weighty implications in terms of future job allocation and earning potential. Examinations, with the consequence of success or failure, are nevertheless popular with teachers and students; and even the alternative process of continuous assessment is seen by both as a series of mini-examinations. It has been suggested that this is a psychological response to a subconsciously recognized hostile environment; where teachers are high priests and students acolytes, sacrifices are required to guarantee survival of the fittest. Or, in less extreme terms, the failure of some increases the sense of worth in those who are left. In the Chinese context, and especially in the past, it was generally accepted that the motivation provided by examinations was an overwhelmingly popular weapon in the teachers' (possibly defensive) armoury, as compared with the self-motivation principle of, for example, McGregor's 'theory Y'. This attitude obviously had implications for course and materials design, where the interest and relevance of teaching materials to the eventual practical purposes of the students clearly had lower priority than might otherwise have been the case.

Those, then, are the traditional guises that we are asking the tutors to discard as inappropriate in the particular circumstances of distance education and of a communicative approach to language learning. The basic difference between the two is that the informative role is less important than the guiding one. The main functions of a tutor as we see it are:

- to deal with major problems raised by students in the context of their home studies during the preceding weeks;
- to introduce the following month's assignments, highlighting certain topics and tasks and explaining the general direction and purpose of the unit;
- at a more personal level, to check individual progress and to be available for consultation at this level on any wider study-related problems.

What tutors cannot do is to 'teach' every item in the course, provide 'the answer' to every task set, 'mark' every piece of written/oral work undertaken by a student, or indeed oblige every

student to re-organize his home-life so as to allow for conscientious study of the materials. These circumstances entail a primarily *advisory* role on the tutor's part and the corresponding guises we are asking him to adopt are: as group leader, as consultant, as assessor and as counsellor. Note that this calls for gradual adjustment rather than dramatic change.

As *group leader* the tutor, like the military commander, will instigate and direct events and decide the overall balance of activities. But he will do so much less ostentatiously. He has considerably less time than the traditional teacher in direct contact with his students, and yet he has to be more aware of them as individuals than as a class. He has to consider the most effective use of his time and of theirs. He has to elicit and react sensitively to feedback in order to judge, for example, when he should teach to perceived gaps in the students' knowledge and when he should step back from the limelight and allow the students to interact among themselves. One of our UEA colleagues records an incident when, after observing an animated and well-led discussion group, she went to congratulate the leader, assuming him to be the tutor, only to discover (to his credit) that he was a student and that the tutor (to his credit) had been quietly making notes on the other students' participation. Being an effective group leader involves establishing a tutor/student relationship that lies appropriately between the extremes of teacher autocracy and total student autonomy.

As a *consultant* the tutor's responsibility is to give the students the benefit of his superior knowledge — on the clear understanding that the students must take some initiative in directing his attention to their problems, and that, depending on the nature of the problems, he may either offer information or, preferably, enter into a dialogue aimed at encouraging students to discover answers from their own store of knowledge or from an external source, and by developing their own reasoning powers.

It is, perhaps, worth adding that since the tutors have the same mother tongue as their students they possess what we consider to be two positive advantages; they can appreciate the nature and causes of the main linguistic (and pedagogic) difficulties experienced by the students; and as demonstrators of English usage they should be able to offer an attainable model of acceptability adequate for most circumstances. Both factors should

help the tutor, as consultant, to be informative, supportive and encouraging.

As *assessor* the tutor will try to obtain a balanced overall picture of student performance. As we have said, he cannot 'mark' every piece of work undertaken by every student; and he should be less concerned with right and wrong, or success and failure, than with rates of progress. The sequential and cumulative progression of the material in the *Student's Guides* means that the completion of the tasks set must indicate general progress. A more detailed picture of such progress emerges from key focus exercises and achievement-assessing tasks, and on these the tutor will concentrate.

Apart from adopting a less prescriptive stance than the judge, the assessor has to be more aware of the student as an individual, and better able to decide whether guidance can effectively be offered on a group basis or should be dealt with through personal contact with that individual. He should encourage the students to identify their own specific needs for English in terms of present or future career, and to evaluate their own performance in carrying out acts of communication, rather than to aim at simply scoring points in a test or examination. To this purpose the materials of the last year of the course have a 'special purpose' slant which should facilitate the transfer of linguistic skills to identified areas of interest for work-oriented purposes.

And in acting as *counsellor* the tutor combines the knowledge of individual students gained as group leader, consultant and assessor and — through advice, encouragement and guidance — seeks, above all else, to give the students confidence in themselves and an understanding and appreciation of what it means to be an active participant in the learning process instead of a passive recipient of information transmitted through the traditional teaching methods.

But if students are to acquire self-confidence it is obvious that tutors must also have confidence in themselves. We cannot expect that this fairly traumatic adjustment of role to happen overnight — but it is beginning to happen, and the kind of effective tutoring we referred to earlier, if not yet the norm, is developing at an encouraging rate. A sure indication that the tutors are getting into the swing of their advisory role, and gaining more confidence in that role, is that we are no longer being swamped with requests

from them to explain minute detail of text or methodology. As their confidence grows we shall seek in our training sessions

- to encourage critical evaluation of class techniques and a clear-sightedness about student needs and the assessment of progress; and
- above all else, to practise what we as trainers preach, and move out of the limelight — that is, move from the fairly authoritative stance which it was tactically useful for us to adopt at first and assume an advisory role which will gradually enable us more effectively to exploit the local expertise that we have identified.

SUMMARY

Let us sum up with the help of four simple diagrams.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the traditional authoritative role. The divided circle represents the normal classroom relationship, with the teacher dominating the learning process of his students and becoming shaped, through tradition and habit, to that role. The arrow indicates that the link between teacher and student is one-way: from teacher to student.

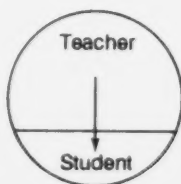


Figure 5.1. Authoritative role in the classroom

Figure 5.2 represents a modern advisory role in the context of distance education. Distance education is different from conventional classroom teaching — hence the diagram has a different shape. The divided rectangle indicates a supportive (side-by-side) relationship between tutor and student, and one in which the student's responsibility for self-study is considerably greater than the tutor's involvement in the learning process. The

arrow indicates a reciprocal relationship.

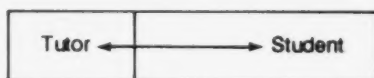


Figure 5.2. Advisory role in distance education

Figure 5.3 represents one of several mismatches which arise if either tutor or student (or both) fail to adjust to the circumstances of distance education. In this case the teacher/tutor is adopting an authoritative role towards students whose needs are best met through an advisory role combining group leadership, consultancy, assessment and counselling. The link between tutor and student is this time a tenuous one.



Figure 5.3. Mismatch in distance education

Figure 5.4 enables an interesting hypothesis to be formed. The diagram represents the relationship between teacher and student when English is taught communicatively in the classroom. The shape of the diagram is the same as in Figure 5.1; the relationship between teacher and student is the same as in Figure 5.2. Does this suggest that it may be easier for the teacher to adjust from the authoritative classroom role to an advisory role in distance education if he first adjusts to an advisory classroom role — for example, by adopting a communicative approach in his normal language classes?

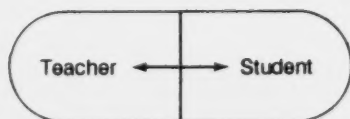


Figure 5.4. Advisory role in the classroom

Alternatively, is it also possible that a teacher/tutor who has adjusted to the advisory role in the English Diploma programme may be more inclined to transfer his training and experience back into the normal classroom? That at least is our hope, and the reason we believe that the programme may make a contribution to the development of ELT in China.

An interesting footnote may now be added to these reflections which were limited to a relatively early stage of the English Diploma programmes.

The Department of Foreign Languages at South China Normal University, now headed by Professor Hsu Lin Sian, are at present working on a project to phase out the course books which have hitherto formed the core of the regular undergraduate English syllabus, and to replace them with materials drawn directly from the *English Diploma Course*. It appears, therefore, that the staff at SCNU have adjusted so well to the novel content and methodology introduced with these materials, and have become over the years so convinced of their utility, that they are ready to go out on a considerable limb to re-organize and re-direct the whole thrust of their English-teaching effort. Modifications will of course have to be made as distance material is adapted for use in the classroom; but the essentially communicative and student-centred approach will remain.

This seems to us a notable compliment to all concerned, not least the teachers themselves, and to fulfil a good part of the hopes we expressed above about the general development of ELT in China.

CHAPTER 6.1

Developments in the Training of English Teachers, 1979–1989

Helen Oatey

This article examines the developments that took place between 1979 and 1989 in the training of English teachers. It focusses on in-service teacher training courses, describing and analyzing the various types of courses that were set up, and also includes a brief discussion of other training opportunities. The article is divided into three main sections: *Phase 1, 1979–83; Phase 2, 1983–88; and Phase 3, 1988 and the future.*

Most of the material for this article was gathered during the years 1981 to 1988 when I was running teachers training courses at Shanghai Jiaotong University. It was extremely difficult, however, to obtain a comprehensive and accurate picture of teacher training throughout China. There was little official documentation available, and although I had frequent discussions with teacher trainers at other centres, personal contact was naturally limited, and my descriptions reflect a Shanghai perspective.

PHASE 1: 1979–1983

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TEACHER TRAINING NEEDS AND POLICIES

At the beginning of this period, China's educational system was suffering greatly from the effects of the Cultural Revolution. The education of young people had been disrupted for about ten years (from 1966 to 1976), when intellectuals had been forced to abandon many of their teaching responsibilities and to take part, along with their students, in labouring work. Standards in education had therefore become very low, and in the late 1970s and early 1980s the government was particularly concerned to rectify this. They focussed their attention first on tertiary level education, and took steps to raise the standard of teaching in China's colleges and universities.

In terms of English teachers, there were two groups of people who particularly needed help. Firstly, there were former teachers of Russian who had had to become English teachers when Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated in the late 1950s. These teachers had never received any formal training in English and were now in their late 40s or early 50s. They had great difficulty communicating orally in English, but often had a good grasp of English grammar and could read slowly and fairly accurately. Secondly, there were young English teachers (in their late 20s or early 30s) who had 'graduated' during the Cultural Revolution, but who had received only minimal training in English and other subjects. Their general educational standard was typically low, and their proficiency in English was limited. They were referred to as WPS (worker-peasant-soldier) students.

At the beginning of this period, the State Education Commission (then known as the Ministry of Education) decided to establish 24 in-service teacher training centres throughout the country. The centres were each to run six one-semester courses (20 weeks) over a 3-year period, and the aim was thereby to retrain about one-third of China's tertiary level English teachers. The first courses began in 1980, with some centres starting in February and others in September.

RETRAINING PROGRAMMES

Teaching Staff and their Responsibilities

Most (or possibly all) of the teachers on the retraining

programmes were EFL/ESL specialists from overseas. They came from various English-speaking countries, and were often linked with a particular programme or organization (for example, the Fulbright scheme or the British Council). The foreign teachers were usually completely responsible for the design of the 6-month course, and often had to provide the teaching materials as well. They were given little advance briefing on either the programmes or the trainees, and the information that they did receive was often inaccurate or misleading. This inevitably led to problems of course design.

Selection of Trainees

The 24 retraining centres were located in different parts of the country, and prospective trainees were expected to apply to the centre closest to them geographically. Interest in the courses was high. Applicants were given a selection test, which was normally grammatically-based, and the best candidates were chosen on the basis of the results. Initially all of this was handled by Chinese staff within each centre, but later foreign teachers in some centres became partially involved. For example, in 1982 British teachers at Shanghai Jiaotong University began interviewing all selected candidates, and reserved the right to refuse any trainees who were exceptionally weak in oral communicative ability.

Course Design and Teaching Approach

Some basic guidelines were provided nationally for the design of the courses, and as a result, most training programmes focussed on two major areas: language improvement and teaching methodology. In addition, there were usually some supplementary courses, such as linguistics and cultural background. However, the details of the course designs varied considerably from centre to centre. For example, some centres completely integrated the methodology and language improvement components, and taught methodology only indirectly through demonstration in language classes. Other centres had two separate components, and although they demonstrated many techniques in the language lessons, they also gave lectures and workshops on methodology topics.

There were also major differences in the ways in which the language improvement components were handled. Some centres focussed on listening and speaking skills (because they had been

informed that trainees were weakest in these areas), whereas others gave equal weighting to all four skills. Moreover, individual teachers varied in their approach to teaching the skills. Most were eclectic, and supported a broadly communicative approach. However, Light and Works (1984) report that in their four-member team working at Beijing University, one was an advocate of the *silent way* (Gattegno, 1976), one of *community language learning* (Curran, 1976), and two were eclectic.

Some of these similarities and differences can be seen by comparing the programmes taught at Beijing University and Shanghai Jiaotong University.

Beijing University (Fulbright Program, Spring 1980)	Shanghai Jiaotong University (British Council programme, Autumn 1981)
Methods & Language Skills: 180 hours Linguistics: 40 hours American Culture: 40 hours	Language Skills: 260 hours Methodology: 60 hours British Culture: 20 hours

Source: (Light & Works, 1984; own teaching records)

The textbooks used in the programmes were nearly always Western publications, and reflected the preferences of the teaching staff.

Assessment and Certification

At the end of each 6-month course, most centres gave their trainees a final examination, and graded them on the basis of those results. Reports were written on each trainee, and these were given both to the individuals concerned and to the institutes where they worked. However, there was no standardization between centres in terms of the scales that were used, nor of the standard of attainment required in order to achieve a particular mark.

PROBLEMS

A number of problems emerged during the three years in which the programmes were running, and these are discussed in this section.

Views on Teaching/Learning

Initially the trainees were quite polite about the teaching they were receiving, but later it emerged that many were somewhat dissatisfied. For example, at Shanghai Jiaotong University some complained that they were "not really learning very much", and felt that many classroom activities were a waste of time. Role play, discussion and games were often regarded in this way; instead of these activities they wanted the foreign teachers to explain difficult points of grammar or the subtle difference between two or more words. Moreover, many trainees were confused as to how best to study on their own. They were used to memorizing vocabulary lists and reciting texts, and yet the foreign teachers rarely asked them to do such things. In fact, most of their textbooks did not even contain vocabulary lists!

Problems such as these were largely the result of differing views of the teaching/learning process. In a traditional Chinese classroom, knowledge is emphasized, and the acquisition of knowledge is seen as the central part of the learning process (Zhang, 1984). As a result, activities that encourage the development of knowledge are favoured, and in foreign language classes teachers give detailed grammatical analyses of texts and carefully explain the meaning and usage of vocabulary items. In the West, on the other hand, there is more of a focus on the process; language teachers favour more student-centred classrooms, and try to raise their students' proficiency by encouraging them to use the language through activities such as role play and group discussion.

Unfortunately both the teachers and the trainees involved in the programmes typically failed to appreciate each other's positions, and to recognize the real source of the problem. They sometimes offended each other by making exaggerated statements and claims, with some foreign teachers, for example, declaring that students should "throw their dictionaries out of the window", and with some Chinese teachers maintaining that "foreigners only play games in their classes."

Opposition to Methodology

Most of the centres running specific courses in teaching methodology soon discovered that the trainees disliked these components, and dismissed them as irrelevant and boring; they wanted them replaced with extra language improvement classes. It seems that there were a number of factors that led to such feelings.

Contrary Expectations — The trainees interpreted the term 'teacher training' quite differently from the foreign teachers (Maley, 1983). They associated it only with language improvement, and had no idea that methodology would be a major focus of the course. The foreign teachers, on the other hand, assumed that teacher training involved 'training people how to teach', and that this naturally meant including a methodology component.

'Success' of Traditional Methods — Many trainees felt that the traditional methods had been successful in producing high standards of English in the country, and that there was therefore no need for any change.

Constraints Imposed by Superiors — Trainees felt they would not be free to implement any new and different techniques because of opposition and control from their superiors.

Constraints Imposed by Examinations — The trainees felt that if they taught in a different way, such as by focussing on skills development, their students would not be adequately prepared for the grammatically-based examinations.

Constraints Imposed by Textbooks — The trainees pointed out that it was difficult to use a more communicative approach with traditional Chinese textbooks.

Student Demands — The trainees maintained that Chinese students wanted to be taught in a traditional Chinese way, and that they would complain to the college authorities if a teacher failed to do this.

Dislike of Linguistics

The training centres that offered courses in linguistics usually found that the trainees also disliked this component. They frequently complained that the classes were boring, and that linguistics was irrelevant to them. Some had difficulty coping with the content because of their low standard of English, and few were motivated to work hard at the subject because of its lack of prestige in China at that time.

DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

All of these problems naturally led teacher trainers to re-evaluate the design of their courses. Grabe and Mahon (1981), for example, wrote: "Like Patrie and Daum [letter in September 1980 *TESOL Quarterly* Forum], we arrived here expecting to teach methodology and linguistics. And like Patrie and Daum we have considerably altered our viewpoint since we've been here . . . the first need of Chinese teachers is properly designed materials if they are to alter their approach to language teaching. We . . . feel that an approach to teacher training which emphasizes methodology won't work in China." As a result of changes of opinion like these, many centres decided to drop their linguistics component, and to reduce their emphasis on teaching methodology. Instead they placed greater importance on improving the trainees' language skills.

Meanwhile, however, Chinese EFL specialists were being exposed more and more to developments overseas in the field. Through conferences, visits and exchanges, through the influence of foreign teachers working in China, and through the import of foreign EFL materials, they began re-thinking many EFL issues. By 1983 methodology had become an area of heated debate in China, and numerous articles discussing questions such as the suitability of the communicative approach for China started appearing in local journals. By the end of this period, not only had the English proficiency level of numerous English teachers been raised, but large numbers of people (of varying degrees of seniority) had also become interested in discussing and investigating EFL issues.

PHASE 2: 1983-1988

NEEDS AND POLICIES

In early 1983 the 3-year teacher training project came up for review. It was felt that although there had been a number of problems and complaints, the courses had nevertheless been very successful, and that they were still fulfilling a very important role. They were helping to raise the English proficiency level of a large proportion of tertiary level English teachers, and were increasing their awareness of methodological issues. So in early 1983, the State Education Commission (SEC) decided to continue running teacher training courses, and to launch a new 5-year project. The courses in the new project were to be longer (1 or 2 years, as compared with months), and were to be of a higher standard. They were called *zhujiao jinxiuban* in Chinese, and ATTCs (Assistant/Advanced Teacher Training Courses) in English. *Zhujiao jinxiuban* literally means a training course for Assistant Teachers (the title for teachers at tertiary level whose rank is lower than lecturer). At first the English translation was *Assistant Teacher Training Course*, but later it became *Advanced Teacher Training Course*. Perhaps this was a subconscious attempt to raise the status of the course!

When the first ATTCs were planned, the State Education Commission was particularly concerned about teachers who had not received a full 4-year university education (i.e. WPS students) and yet were working in colleges and universities. In early 1983 they announced that all such teachers would not be allowed to continue teaching at tertiary level unless they obtained a special teaching qualification. The new ATTCs were to provide such a qualification, and so to a large extent they were set up for the benefit of WPS 'graduated'. In fact, however, it was possible for any practising teachers to apply for the courses if they had the approval of their places of work.

The first ATTCs were run during the academic year 1983-84. These were pilot courses, and they took place in a number of key centres throughout the country. Shanghai Jiaotong University ran a pilot one-year course for teachers of English to non-English majors, and Guangzhou Foreign Languages Institute and Beijing Foreign Studies University ran pilot two-year courses for teachers of English to English majors. The following year (1984-85) the

number of ATTCs was expanded greatly, and many centres throughout China started running such courses. The courses could be divided into 3 main types:

- 1-year courses for teachers of English to non-English majors
- 1-year courses for teachers of English to English majors
- 2-year courses for teachers of English to English majors

ATTCs

Teaching Staff

ATTCs were normally taught by both Chinese and foreign EFL/ESL specialists, and, as with the earlier courses, the foreign teachers were often linked with a particular overseas organization or university. The ratio of Chinese to foreign staff varied from centre to centre, and also from year to year, with some centres encouraging local staff to become more and more involved in the programmes. Responsibility for the design of the training course also varied from centre to centre. In some places the foreign teachers devised the syllabus primarily by themselves, whereas in others it was decided upon by senior Chinese members of staff.

Selection of Trainees

Candidates normally applied to the nearest regional centre which was running an appropriate one-year ATTC, but they could also apply for a two-year programme at a key university if their level was high enough. Selection for all courses was based on an entrance examination which was set by the host institution, but which had to conform to certain guidelines laid down by the SEC. The SEC required that the examination comprise the following papers: linguistics, literature, and language proficiency. The examinations for the two-year courses were more difficult than those for the one-year courses.

In some centres the entrance examination was just the first step in the selection procedure. The better candidates were called for interview, and finally selected according to their performance in both the interview and the examination. In other centres, there was no interview.

Initially application numbers for ATTCs were quite high:

more than four prospective trainees applied for each place. However, after a few years the number of applicants dropped sharply.

Course Design

Most one-year ATTCS comprised the following main components: language improvement, teaching methodology, and descriptive/applied linguistics. In addition, most centres offered a number of supplementary courses, such as literature, cultural background and translation. The weighting given to the various components varied from centre to centre, as did the detailed content of the courses. At Shanghai Jiaotong University, the components were balanced as follows:

Language Improvement:	126 hours
Teaching Methodology:	162 hours
Linguistics:	144 hours
Supplementary Courses:	108 hours

The two-year ATTCS were of a higher academic standard than the one-year courses, and did not contain a language improvement component. They mainly comprised linguistics courses, as well as some additional components such as literature.

The academic components of the ATTCS were taught by means of lectures, seminars and workshops. And in several centres the trainees were also expected to improve their practical teaching skills by means of microteaching sessions and teaching practice assignments.

Assessment and Certification

Trainees at most centres had to complete a given number of essays and/or projects, and assessment was based both on this coursework and on examinations. In the spring of 1985 the State Education Commission agreed to issue a special ATTC certificate for the one-year courses, which stated that the trainee had acquired half of the credits needed for a Master's degree.

CHANGES IN POLICY

After the initial plan for the ATTCs had been worked out in early 1983, there were a number of subsequent developments in educational policy, at both a national and local level, which had a marked impact on the design and success of the ATTCs. The main developments were as follows:

- Spring 1983: State Education Commission announced that all WPS students needed a teaching qualification, such as an ATTC certificate, if they were to be allowed to continue teaching.
- Autumn 1984: State Education Commission announced that assistant teachers needed an MA degree before they could be promoted to lecturer.
- Spring 1985: State Education Commission announced that assistant teachers could be promoted to lecturer if they had an ATTC certificate.
- Spring 1985: Many institutes informed their assistant teachers that they had to obtain a qualification in a second foreign language before they could be promoted to lecturer. Some institutes demanded that the teachers return immediately to take an examination if they wanted to be considered for promotion.
- 1985–86: Many institutes insisted that their teachers be present at post if they wanted to be considered for promotion. As a result, teachers who had failed the ATTC entrance examination were often promoted over those who had passed and were away studying!

Course Design

These developments and changes in educational policy had a major impact on the design of the courses. Initially the ATTCs were designed to meet the needs of the WPS students, and so they focussed on language improvement and on the development of practical teaching skills. However, when it was announced that all assistant teachers needed a Master's degree in order to be

eligible for promotion to lecturer, the trainees started pressing for ATTCs to be recognized as providing a Master's qualification, and urgent talks began between the various parties concerned. The teaching staff at some centres were then asked suddenly to change the design of their training programmes so that they would fit in better with State Education Commission regulations concerning syllabuses for Master's programmes. As a result, the focus of many training programmes changed from a practical orientation to a much more theoretical one: much greater emphasis was given to academic courses such as descriptive and applied linguistics, and the amount of language improvement work was reduced.

Later on, when individual institutes started emphasizing the importance of a qualification in a second foreign language, pressure was also exerted for such a component to be added to the training programme.

Trainee Motivation

The developments and changes in educational policy also had a major negative effect on trainee motivation. One of the main problems was uncertainty over the value of an ATTC qualification for promotion purposes. Trainees felt that the goalposts for promotion were constantly being moved; first a Master's qualification was demanded, then an ATTC qualification, and then a qualification in a second foreign language. Finally it turned out that many institutes promoted their teachers merely according to the exact number of years of teaching experience, and this gave an advantage to those who had failed the ATTC entrance examination! As a result of all this, many trainees lost faith in the value of studying hard.

Trainee motivation also became low because the authorities seemed unconcerned about providing them with full training opportunities. Although the State Education Commission eventually recognized the postgraduate status of ATTCs and issued a certificate stating that the trainees on one-year courses had obtained half of the credits necessary for a Master's degree, the trainees were unable to gain the other half! The State Education Commission made no provision for this, and the trainees naturally found this very depressing.

As a result of these motivational factors, the number of applicants for the later ATTCs (1986 onwards) dropped

dramatically. Often there were much fewer applicants than numbers of places.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

ATTCs were also affected by a number of other educational developments that took place during this period, and these had a more positive influence. During the past ten years or so many EFL specialists in China have become familiar with recent developments in syllabus design, and have studied key works such as Munby (1978) and Van Ek (1980). As a result, many of the English syllabuses used in colleges and universities in China have been, or are being, reformed. For example, a new national syllabus has been introduced for non-English majors studying courses of science and technology at university level. This new syllabus is skills-based and includes a strong functional component.

Testing And Evaluation

Along with the syllabus changes have come developments in testing and evaluation. There have been moves to reduce the strong emphasis on grammar, and to include in examinations sections that measure proficiency in the *use* of English. For instance, a new set of national examinations has been introduced to complement the new EST syllabus and is skills-based. However, at a local level, many examinations are still almost totally grammatically-based, and a recent British ELT delegation report (British Council, 1988) points out that even the new national examinations are "over-traditional in type".

Provision of Materials

During the past few years an increasingly large variety of ELT materials has become available in China. Many training centres have developed small libraries or resource centres, and various Western publications can also be bought locally. These are usually 'pirate' editions and are not on open sale. In addition, many key universities have recently been developing new sets of textbooks; for example, Guangzhou Foreign Language Institute has produced *Communicative English for Chinese Learners*, and

Shanghai Jiaotong University has developed *Common Core English*. In most cases, these new publications have been jointly written by Chinese and foreign specialists, and in a few instances, Western publishers have been involved.

Methodology and Linguistics

In the early 1980s, the status of linguistics as a subject was low; institutes placed little value on a qualification in linguistics, and most people preferred to study literature. Recently, though, the situation has begun to change. An increasing number of English departments now want to run courses in linguistics, and there is a corresponding rise in demand for qualified teachers.

Similarly, more and more English departments now recognize the importance of their teachers having good training in teaching methodology. And with the developments mentioned above, some of the arguments raised earlier against the methodology course are no longer valid.

EVALUATION OF ATTCS

There has been no systematic follow-up of ATTCT trainees to find out the extent to which they were helped by their training. However, responses to a questionnaire issued by Shanghai International Studies University, and informal contact between individual trainees and their teachers, both indicate that the training was very beneficial. Many trainees reported that they were using more communicative methods in their teaching and that their students were responding favourably; some reported that their students had obtained better examination results, even when those examinations were grammatically based. And nearly all of the trainees commented that they had gained greatly in terms of confidence: they were more confident in their use of the English language, and were surer of what to do in the classroom and why.

So despite the many problems associated with the ATTCTs, it seems they have had a definite and positive impact on tertiary level English teaching.

PHASE 3: 1988 AND THE FUTURE

CURRENT TEACHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

There are now a variety of teacher training opportunities for teachers of English in China.

In-service Teacher Training (Tertiary Level Teachers) — The five-year ATTC project officially came to an end in 1988, and although some centres are continuing to run ATTCs, many are moving into a new phase of development. A few centres (for example, Shanghai Jiaotong University) have merged their ATTC with their Master's course in order to form a new 1.5 year course. It is hoped that this 'merged' course will overcome some of the problems associated with ATTCs (for example, by providing genuine opportunities for trainees to obtain a Master's degree), and that it will thus attract more applicants.

In-service Teacher Training (Secondary School Teachers) — During the last few years, the State Education Commission has been able to expand in-service teacher training opportunities to secondary school teachers, and there are now many centres in China which offer such courses.

Undergraduate Teacher Training — There are a large number of colleges and universities in China that run undergraduate courses for future English language teachers. Originally these courses focussed almost exclusively on language and literature, but now many of them include training in teaching methodology and in linguistics. This has helped considerably to raise the professional standard of young teachers.

Part-time Training — Many colleges and universities employing foreign EFL teachers run part-time courses (two or three hours per week) for their Chinese teachers of English. The content of the courses is variable, and depends very much both on the level and interests of the Chinese teachers, and on the training and competence of the foreign teachers. Some courses focus on language improvement, some on methodology and/or linguistics, and some on a combination of all three.

Training Overseas — Since the early 1980s an increasing number of English teachers have been able to go abroad for training. Many have received funding through official agreements between the Chinese government and overseas bodies such as the British Council and the World Bank, or through agreements between particular Chinese and overseas institutes. Others have gone abroad privately. The majority have gone to the USA, but significant numbers have also gone to Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

CURRENT TEACHER TRAINING NEEDS

The teacher training opportunities described above are all important and need to be continued; in addition, there are two particular areas of need that are not yet being adequately met.

Ongoing Support for Retrained Teachers — At present most trainees receive little or no ongoing support after they have completed their courses. They cannot keep up to date in their field because there are very few professional books and journals in their local libraries, and they often have no experienced person with whom they can discuss professional issues. This seriously reduces the long-term effectiveness of the teacher training programmes.

Training of Teacher Trainers — Most teacher training courses have so far been staffed primarily by overseas EFL specialists, but from the long-term point of view it is important that Chinese teachers take more responsibility in this area. This means that a small proportion of teachers need training as trainers. A few steps have already been taken to provide this; for example, the British Council operates a Counterpart Training Scheme whereby small numbers of staff in some key Chinese institutes receive special training both in China and in Britain. However, there have been problems with such schemes: the future trainers have not always been wisely selected, and on completion of their training, many have been allocated ordinary teaching responsibilities. Further consideration needs to be given to this problem.

THE FUTURE

Achievements to Date

During the ten years from 1979 to 1989 a very large number of Chinese teachers of English received some form of teacher training. It is extremely difficult to calculate exact figures, either in terms of total numbers trained or in terms of proportion of teachers needing training, but a very approximate guide is indicated by the following figures. Shanghai Jiaotong University trained nearly 600 tertiary level English teachers on in-service courses between 1980 and 1988; there were at least 23 other centres doing the same, and so over 13,000 teachers received this form of training during this period. In addition, of course, there were many other teachers who received other forms of training.

The first series of training programmes (1980-83) suffered from the fact that they took place in advance of other educational developments. The trainees merely wanted to improve their language skills, and were very pessimistic about the feasibility of changing their teaching approach. Since then, though, there have been developments in the syllabuses, examinations and materials used in China, and so teachers are now being 'forced' to reconsider their teaching approach. Feedback from former trainees is positive, and it seems the time is now ripe for implementing even more effective teacher training courses. However, they are unlikely to be successful unless the following recommendations are taken into account.

Recommendations

Types of Training Courses — Since 1984 teachers have been increasingly anxious to obtain a Master's degree qualification, and feel that only in this way can their future (in terms of pay and promotion) be guaranteed. This has meant that training course syllabuses have veered away from a practical orientation to a much more theoretical orientation. However, the vast majority of English teachers in China have no need for detailed and complex courses in linguistics; they need a very firm foundation in teaching methodology, some help with their language skills, and some introductory courses in applied linguistics. For this reason, teacher trainers at an ATTC conference in Shanghai in 1988 recommended that China should run two distinct types of teacher

training courses:

- *Diploma or Certificate Course in TEFL* which has a strong practical orientation and which suits the needs of the large numbers of English teachers working in rural or semi-rural areas;
- *MA in TEFL* course which has a greater theoretical emphasis and which meets the needs and interests of a smaller number of English teachers.

In effect, these two types of courses already exist in China, but there has been constant pressure to 'upgrade' the former into the latter. This should be resisted, and the validity of the goals of the two types of courses should be recognized.

Certification and Recognition — Many of the teacher training problems that have arisen since 1984 have revolved around the issue of certification and recognition. Teachers naturally want to take courses which will not only provide them with the professional training that they need for their teaching, but also with the certification and recognition that they need for their promotion and pay rises. At present only full degrees (Bachelors, Masters and PhDs) are truly recognized in China, and yet it is both unnecessary and unrealistic at present to expect all foreign language teachers to obtain a minimum of a Master's degree. Everyone should be encouraged (or obliged) to obtain a practical teaching qualification, such as a Diploma in TEFL, and this qualification should be fully recognized by the degree-issuing section of the State Education Commission. A smaller number can then go on to obtain a Master's degree if they wish.

Standardization — Up to now the centres running teacher training courses have been almost completely autonomous: they have designed their own programmes and implemented their own assessment procedures. As a result, there has been considerable disparity between centres in terms of the quality and amount of work expected. Trainees have later made direct comparisons between the grades they have obtained. To help reduce problems of this sort, an external examiner system should be introduced, and cooperation and coordination between centres should be encouraged.

Attraction of Applicants — The number of applications for teacher

training courses has recently dropped dramatically; although this is partly due to complex social, economic and political factors operating within Chinese society as a whole, better publicity regarding the courses might help to improve the situation slightly.

Much has been achieved over the past ten years, and the time is in many ways now ripe for the implementation of even more effective teacher training programmes. Educational standards are certainly much higher than ten years ago, but unfortunately there is social and economic unrest in the country. Teachers are very poorly paid and their status in society is very low; few new graduates now want to join the profession, and many practising teachers are trying to leave. The government needs to adopt a very open and flexible approach towards planning and implementing its educational policies, and it needs to appear truly determined to solve the problems that teachers are so concerned about. Unless it does this, teacher training in China may pass through a depressingly dismal phase.

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'Doing What the Romans Don't Do': Advanced Teacher Training Courses in China

Jane Sunderland

This paper describes briefly the structure and organization of those Advanced Teacher Training Courses (ATTCs), and goes on to explore issues relating to methodology and course content. The methodology employed is not particularly 'Chinese', however, aspects of the attitudes to course content — skills improvement, methodology and applied linguistics — may have distinctive 'Chinese characteristics'. The paper concludes by looking at what foreign involvement in such courses can mean, the first ATTC Conference, and future directions for these courses in China.

The general function of ATTCs in the PRC is to provide in-service training for English teachers working in tertiary institutions, both Chinese and foreigners, therefore this is not about pre-service training, nor does it concern any sort of training of teachers of English who are involved in junior or senior secondary schools, though some observations may apply to these other types of courses.

Further, I look only at those ATTCs which have had British

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involvement via the employment of British Council-recruited teachers.

STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF ATTCS

ATTCs are not homogeneous across China and each has changed and developed since its inception. Structure and organization has depended very much on the relationship of the ATTC to the Department within which it operates (often the English Department). An ATTC may, for example, be an 'island' within the Department in which ATTC teachers decide the syllabus, the timetable and staffing arrangements subject to approval; only ATTC participants do ATTC courses; ATTC participants do no other courses; and ATTC teachers teach only on the ATTC. At the other extreme, a range of teachers teach on other courses as well as the ATTC; classes are attended by both ATTC and non-ATTC students; the course is run by the Department with little or no decisions being made by the ATTC teachers. The Department-ATTC relationship is an important one in that it can and often does influence subjects taught, who teaches what, whether there is teaching practice and microteaching, and if so how, and the wider issues of curriculum design and development, and integration of different subjects.

Certification varies. In the academic year 1987-88, for example, those courses lasting two years (e.g., Beijing Foreign Studies University) led to an MA, those lasting one year (e.g., Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai International Studies University, Nanjing University, Qinghua University) led to a Diploma — though credits gained on one-year courses potentially counted towards an MA. There are now also eighteen-month 'pre-MA' courses, the completion of which must be supplemented by a dissertation if the participant is to be awarded an MA. Until this is done, the participant holds a certificate. Assessment is based on varying combinations of coursework and examinations.

Students come from all over China. They have to be 'experienced' teachers, having taught for two or more years, and are usually aged between 21 and 40, with a fair balance of men and women. The biggest single group are teachers of English majors in teacher training colleges (i.e., they are in effect themselves teacher trainers of junior and/or senior secondary school teachers), but these are unlikely to make up the majority of

the participants on any one course. Of the 30 participants on the Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) ATTC of 1987-88, eleven taught in teachers' colleges, the rest were from other types of institutions, including a university of chemical technology, a part-time college, a political institute, an overseas Chinese university, a foreign languages school, a public security college, an engineering college, a college of political education and a customs college. Other institutions from which students come include medical colleges, agricultural colleges and institutes of foreign trade. Teachers who are interested apply, take an examination set by the Department or by the ATTC teachers, or, if the course leads to an MA, sit for the more difficult National Postgraduate Examination. They may also be asked to attend an interview. There are now fewer applicants than previously.

Participants receive their regular salaries while studying and their fees are paid jointly by the State Education Commission and by their institutions. Very occasionally a student pays (or repays) part of the fees. Students live in institution dormitories or at home, or with other relations.

The number of contact hours for teachers is fixed: Chinese teachers teach eight hours a week, foreign teachers between twelve and sixteen. The teachers on the courses are very largely Chinese and British (British Council-recruited). Occasionally, other foreign teachers teach certain subjects. The Chinese teachers are referred to as 'counterparts'. Ideally, they spend one year with the ATTC, doing some teaching, some administration and being a part-time participant, though this has not always happened before receiving one year's training in the form of an MA in Applied Linguistics and/or ELT at a British university. Then, again ideally, they return to the ATTC, taking over from the British teacher. At SISU, in each of three consecutive years, three counterparts went to Britain. British involvement was thus intended by the British Council and Overseas Development Administration to be phased out, and British 'experts' replaced by Chinese ones. What sometimes happens is that on their return with an MA, counterparts are assigned to non-ATTC classes, or to the ATTC on only a part-time basis.

Decisions about materials usually rest with the ATTC teachers, largely because books, both individual copies and class sets, and audiotapes can be ordered for the ATTC through the British Council in Beijing. These are intended to remain with the project after the departure of the British teachers.

METHODOLOGY AND COURSE CONTENT

The *methodology* used on ATTCs as a whole does not differ radically from that often found outside China, but local expectations, priorities, attitude, and understanding of certain concepts may be in some sense 'Chinese', and this has a bearing on course *content*.

There is no 'core curriculum', the syllabus of each ATTC is up to the Department and/or ATTC teachers in each institution, though the more theoretical two-year MA programmes have some restrictions on the type and number of courses taught. Betty Barr (1988) identifies three main 'strands' in each course: skills improvement, methodology and linguistics. Skills improvement usually includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, possibly integrated skills and study skills — and, often, translation, the 'fifth skill' in China. Methodology may include teaching practice and microteaching; linguistics may include applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. As far as overall methodology is concerned, most ATTCs can be said to use both broad types of teacher training practices identified by Ellis (1986): experiential and awareness raising. Teaching practice and microteaching are experiential; the other courses, and most of the rest of methodology, are 'awareness raising'. Ellis's framework is given in Figure 1.

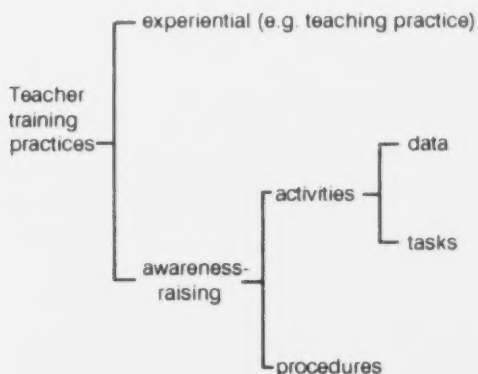


Figure 1. An outline of teacher-training practices

Methodologies *within* each course and each 'awareness-raising' subject vary, each having different proportions of those 'procedures' Ellis associates with 'awareness-raising' practices, and others. There are lectures, discussions, seminars, workshops, tutorials, demonstrations, individual work (including project work), elicitation, private study, plenaries and so on. A similar situation exists for the 'activities', Ellis's 'data' and 'tasks'. On the SISU ATTC, the 'data' was in the form of video recordings (e.g., of microteaching), classroom teaching, a little peer teaching, microteaching itself, readings ELT textbook materials, and samples of students' written work — seven out of the ten in Ellis's list. 'Tasks' for the activities included comparing, preparing, evaluating, improving and listing, and rearranging — six out of Ellis's ten. Broadly speaking, the *methodology* of teacher training in China, at least, in this form of in-service training, is not unique.

When it comes to content, however, it may be justifiable to talk about Chinese characteristics of teacher training (Magee & Liu, 1989; Morrison, 1989). Magee and Liu list four interconnected principles that they perceive "hold for education in China and that are pertinent to teacher training generally":

- education is seen as the acquisition of knowledge *in measurable quantities*, which creates an implicit distinction between *knowing that* and *knowing how* with the former being emphasized and the latter presumed to follow automatically
- a focus on *remembering*: memory is stressed, and understanding is not readily seen as being different from remembering
- *testing* is seen as a measurement of the knowledge that has been remembered
- training, in the sense of knowing how to do something on the basis of some sort of understanding, does not readily conform to the above ideas, and is very hard to test; it has been based traditionally on the relationship between a *master* and an *apprentice*, so that teachers tend to teach in the way that they feel they themselves were successfully taught.

Morrison compares teacher training in China with teacher training in the West; his diagram can be adapted and redrawn in

chart form (Figure 2).

	<i>Teacher training in the West</i>	<i>Teacher training in China</i>
pre-/in-service	pre-service and in-service seen as important	predominantly pre-service or 'learning as you go'
aim	improvement of teaching skills	language improvement promotion
content	practical skills theory only to underly practice	language improvement applied linguistics
style	learner centred	lecturer dominated

Figure 2. Comparison of teacher training in the West with teacher training in China

In the light of these 'Chinese characteristics' of teacher training, let us now look more closely at some of the subjects offered by ATTCs and the overall methodology and other issues associated with these. We take each 'strand' in turn.

Skills (Language) Improvement

Morrison identifies language improvement as both aim and course content in the Chinese understanding of EFL teacher training; this important double role given to language improvement is commensurate with Magee and Liu's principle that 'knowing that' is emphasized over 'knowing how' — which is presumed to follow automatically. In this case 'knowing how' refers to knowing how to teach, but it is also true that, traditionally, 'knowing' English, in the sense of usage, would imply knowing how to use it too. Maley observes that this is also a semantic issue, "teacher training" being among the "key words which are interpreted differently by Chinese host and foreign guest":

Most Chinese host institutions take ['teacher training'] to mean language improvement for their teachers . . . If their teachers 'know' more English, they will teach better. This, for them, is axiomatic. (Maley, 1983)

For non-native speaker teachers of English worldwide, language improvement tends to be seen as extremely important on both pre- and in-service training courses — not unreasonably, since English is the content of their teaching. The view is strong in China, where a good knowledge of English is often equated with being a good teacher of English. The Cultural Revolution perhaps has something to do with this, many young teachers having “feelings of having been deprived . . . during the ‘10 years of chaos’ and [an] obsession with catching up” (Maley, 1984).

Accordingly, the opportunity of listening and speaking to native speakers is something that participants, and counterparts, frequently feel they benefit most from — and having native speaker teachers is accordingly a drawing card for a course.

Few ATTC teachers would object to skills improvement *per se*: firstly, many participants do need this; secondly, as Morrison (1989) points out, “. . . the participants are non-native speakers who have had little (or no) exposure to native speakers and native-speaker teaching materials, and . . . teachers should be providing the best possible models of the target language”; thirdly, simply providing the conditions for ‘subconscious acquisition’ would not provide the face validity required by an EFL teacher training course, especially one with foreign involvement; fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, teaching, say, writing, can also be showing the different ways that writing can be taught.

ATTC participants are not offended by doing sessions on skills improvement, despite being experienced teachers of English. And it is *not* always seen as just a matter of measurable knowledge. In answer to ‘Why do we need language improvement?’, one Shanghai Jiaotong graduate explains:

. . . we are not native English speakers, and we haven’t been to any English speaking countries, but we teach their language, English. As we all know, certain teaching approaches are very demanding on the teacher’s language competence. If we don’t improve our language ability, we can’t say we can make a great improvement in our teaching, because without language improvement, we will feel the safest way is the Grammar-Translation method, or teacher-centred classroom teaching practice. Furthermore, a Chinese teacher’s English level of fluency will certainly affect his or her students and fluency can stimulate his or her students’ motivation to learn English (Li, 1988).

A corresponding belief is that to teach 'communicatively' — not the focus of ATTC, but something that is discussed, and is an idea liked by many participants — requires a higher level of English than does teaching in the more traditional grammar-translation method with the support of a carefully constructed textbook (Magee & Liu, 1989).

For all these reasons, should more time be devoted to skills improvement? Du Jinjiang is one person involved in ATTCs who thinks so. Quoting Strevens' (1973) claim that "since the teacher without an adequate command of the language is probably wasting his own time and that of his pupils, and he may be bruising their general enthusiasm as learners into bargain", Du observes

... if the trainee's language competence is not up to par ... the only sensible and positive path is of course to expand and enhance the language skills component on the course, even though this may be done at the cost of some of the 'theory' component, which is of less immediate significance to teaching. It is always better, I believe, to turn out some usable black-and-white TV sets than to produce glossy colour TV sets that do not actually work. (Du, 1988)

But there are other questions. Where do integrated skills and study skills (both may be seen as rather suspect) fit in? What about translation — which has always been seen as important? What about the possibility of connecting skills improvement to, say, methodology or the theory of second language learning?

There is also the question of priority of skills. In China most traditional English teaching/learning is via intensive reading; a text is 'mined' for the examples of sentence patterns, grammar, vocabulary and idioms it offers. Does this mean ATTCs should focus on improved teaching of intensive reading, or should they rather get away from this idea, and move towards reading *skills* and reading holistically for meaning?

Chinese teachers frequently do not like to teach writing, and to teach speaking and listening is considered problematic and may be paid little attention. Should the teaching of reading then occupy more, or less time than the teaching of the other skills? Here again is the question of whether to teach according to what the situation is, or what it might be in the future — a problem for anyone involved in ATTC curriculum development.

Methodology

Although the topic methodology may be more important in some ATTCs, this is only recently the case. As Maley (1983) and Morrison (1988) discuss — notions of 'methodological improvement' do not fall within the traditional Chinese understanding of teacher training.

The presence of British teachers does not ensure there will be methodology on the timetable — much as Chinese department heads may want to please their foreign 'guests'. There is no automatic assumption that foreign teaching methods are what is wanted especially if the foreign teacher is seen as being better employed in exposing course participants to native-speaker English.

There are several reasons for this situation: the low profile and status of methodology is not just neglect. *Firstly*, methodology as a subject can seem redundant, if there is an assumption that teaching a language well requires only knowing that language well. Accordingly, the traditional overall methodology has been to lecture and to disseminate measurable knowledge. In EFL, the lecture is based on the textbook, and many teachers still 'mine' the intensive reading text for language items; translate everything into Chinese: and talk largely, if not completely, in Chinese.

Methodology may also seem redundant because, despite what can be said about the apparent deficiencies of traditional ways of language teaching in China, many people *have* learned English, and have learned it well, after being taught through those very methods. These include nearly all China's English teachers, to whom alternative methods may appear not only redundant, but also an insult to them and their teachers. Further, if they themselves are still using those traditional methods, alternatives can appear to throw into question their own teaching skills. And if those methods appear to be working, their irrelevance may seem all the more apparent.

Secondly, methodology may not be seen as a 'content' subject — in comparison with, say, literature or linguistics. For this perceived reason (as well as others) it is thus difficult to test, falling into Magee and Liu's 'master-apprentice'/training category. Further, if seen as a 'non-content' subject, it does not have the same prestige as, say, grammar or literature, and gives less prestige to those who teach it. It can therefore be professionally unattractive, a 'low-status' option. Burnaby and Sun (1989)

remind us that:

Chinese teachers are under more pressure than are Western teachers in competing for high status jobs because of the elitist education policies of the power structure. Moreover, Chinese teachers are sensitive about the status of their profession, given the negative attitudes to teachers developed during the Cultural Revolution (Lo, 1984).

Thirdly, resistance to methodology can also stem from the nature of the general methodologies being promoted, specifically from the challenge they appear to pose to traditional teacher-student roles and relationships. Many modern language teaching activities and techniques go against the traditional roles of the teacher and students as the one who knows and the ones who don't. If the teacher is not always at the front of the class, if it is said that students can learn from each other as well as from the teacher, if there is the idea that students can benefit from using language creatively and not just by memorizing what the teacher has told them to, if they hear that the teacher cannot always and should not be expected to always be able to answer students' questions, it can be disconcerting for everyone. And these are the ideas that come from both methodology and skills improvement sessions, whether taught by Chinese or British ATTC teachers. It is probably partly for this reason that British teachers often meet the 'outsider' argument for resistance to change: "In China . . ." "Chinese students . . ." "Chinese teachers of English . . .", which really mean "You don't understand our situation: what you say cannot be suitable for China". Much Western methodology may, in fact, not be suitable for China. Harvey (1985) and Burnaby and Sun (1989) point to the arrogance and zealotry with which some foreign teachers criticize Chinese methods and try to bring Western methodology to China.

Fourthly, methodology can also acquire a bad reputation from, ironically, itself being taught through general methodology which does little to validate the content. Methodology lecturers sometimes stand at the front of the class and lecture, about, say, classroom interaction through pair and groupwork. This may destroy the credibility of the idea for Chinese teacher trainees as the understanding and full appreciation of the idea may be hindered by its conspicuous absence.

The SISU ATTC included in its methodology syllabus of

1987-88 the following areas:

- nature of communication, and of reading, writing, speaking and listening
- teaching of reading, writing, speaking, listening, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary
- roles of the teacher; roles of the learner
- classroom language
- presentation, practice and production
- classroom management
- what a native speaker knows; what a language learner should learn
- how a learner discovers meaning
- history of ELT (including ELT in China)

These were taught through classes, seminars and workshops; rarely through lectures. It was intended as a practical course, while at the same time one that consistently looked at the pedagogical reasons for doing something. Over the two semesters, methodology occupied more time than either of the other two 'strands'.

Anonymous follow-up questionnaires of ATTC students elicited the following comments:

- Methodology [gave me] a variety of teaching techniques.
- I do less talking in class and let the students practise instead.
- Improved language skills make my teaching easier; the communicative approach means the class is more lively.

Two participants from teacher training colleges wrote:

- Practical skills in methodology... helped me to give guidance to student teachers and to know how to evaluate their teaching.
- If I hadn't participated in the ATTC I wouldn't and couldn't have taught the methodology course I am teaching now.

These graduates clearly welcomed and appreciated the

methodology they had experienced on the ATTC.

Wang Huang (1988), a former ATTC leader and current lecturer in methodology, points to different attitudes of administrators, Chinese colleagues and ATTC participants.

- Administrators, she says, are supportive, and encourage teachers to make changes in syllabuses, textbooks and methods, but “do not really see the importance of methodology as a core course in modern language teaching”.
- Of Chinese colleagues, she says:
“Generally speaking, young teachers are more enthusiastic and creative. Those who have returned from courses abroad, in particular, have a great willingness to adapt what they have learned to their teaching in China. But older teachers who are more experienced tend to . . . think that the traditional methods are not that unworkable while new ones seem ‘childish’ and ‘game-like’.
- Most pertinently, ATTC participants
“ . . . being teachers themselves . . . are keen and eager to learn new methods so as to use them in their future work. Many of them have used what they have learnt with some success . . . Nevertheless, some of them cannot help being sceptical of the applicability of the methodology they learnt on the ATTC when they return to their institutions because good and useful as they are, new methods should be carried out in accordance with a corresponding curriculum, teaching materials, system of examination and assessment.

We return to this later but we can add to Wang’s list a corresponding reappraisal of the ‘role of the teacher’: from one who knows everything to one who facilitates learning through appropriate activities.

Wang does not advocate abandoning methodology on the grounds that it is useless without structural and attitudinal changes, rather, she recommends ‘adapt rather than adopt’. This means to start from the EFL situation in China, which involves problems in two dimensions:

- "Developing competence and flexibility on the part of the trainee teachers in the manipulation of teaching methods. Successful teachers should be flexible in choosing from their repertoires of methods and techniques those appropriate for their teaching situation including their own personality, student needs and aptitudes, and other factors which affect learning.
- Basing methodology courses on the textbooks the trainee teachers are using in their teaching. Related tasks such as observations, teaching practice, evaluation of the textbook will enable the trainee teachers to see that methodology is not something far-fetched with little applicability to their work, but on the contrary, it helps make the most of the available textbooks so as to achieve effective learning."

And indeed 'traditional' textbook exercises have been shown to be amenable to adaptation (see, for example, Buckley, 1982); such adaptation is in fact often used on INSET courses.

If methodology itself is problematic in in-service advanced teacher training in China, its logical culmination, teaching practice, can be more so. There is no established administrative and organizational framework within which it can be done. Neither is it *expected* — unlike in, say, pre-service secondary school teacher training in teachers' colleges. This brings us back to the principle of emphasizing 'knowing that', the fact that knowing *how* to do something is hard to test, and that if something cannot be tested it means it cannot be remembered, so cannot increase one's knowledge and is thus by implication questionable. This is of particular relevance to 'experiential' teaching practice and microteaching.

In practice, though, obstacles tend not to be ideological, and teaching practice and microteaching can and do take place if ATTC teachers are willing to do the necessary administrative, logistical and PR work to make them happen. But the fact remains that they are merely permitted, not demanded.

How are teaching practice and microteaching done? Though teaching practice logically includes microteaching, we can look at them separately. Morrison's 'defining characteristics' of microteaching and teaching practice (slightly simplified) are useful here:

- Microteaching is peer-teaching over short slots of time . . . It is basically discrete-point practice, i.e., practice of one teaching technique, or of teaching one skill or one language item.
- Teaching practice involves teaching 'real' students and is holistic practice over a whole lesson period (Morrison, 1988). It can and does also extend over several lessons.

Teaching practice is usually done with an undergraduate class, whom ATTC participants teach using the class's usual textbook. On the SISU ATTC, *within the constraints imposed by that textbook*, each trainee could try out some of what she/he had learned.

Teaching practice needs to be handled carefully to obviate resistance from either ATTC participants or the students. The students may feel they are being 'used' and that the ATTC participants are not 'real' teachers; if the ATTC teachers are from rural areas and the undergraduates from the city, as is often the case, the students may have better English than the teacher. Needless to say, this does not help the anxious ATTC participant. Further, the ATTC participant may feel that the activity is unnecessary or a waste of time. Reactions are invariably mixed — depending, on how the teaching practice is handled by the ATTC teachers, and, how the ATTC participants conduct themselves in class. Feedback suggests, however, that most participants do in fact feel it is valuable.

Microteaching can be and often is more experimental than teaching practice, and can be done in a variety of ways. On the SISU ATTC, participants were encouraged to try something out *without worrying about real-life constraints* — to get hands-on experience of new ways of doing something. They were given a list of 'discrete-point' items, including structures, language functions, points of pronunciation and reading skills, and each asked to choose one, which they would have to teach to six or seven of their classmates for about eight minutes. Each participant had a 'rehearsal', was given feedback by an ATTC teacher, then taught the 'lesson' to a different group. This second lesson was videotaped. The tape was then watched by the 'teacher' with his or her 'students', and the ATTC teacher. The 'teacher' was first asked to evaluate him- or herself, then received more general feedback. The ATTC teacher's role was to keep the discussion

positive and the criticism constructive.

Methodology can be taught without teaching practice and microteaching. However, they are important ways through which what has been covered can be put into practice with some 'wholeness' and reality, and which ensure the course is not a mass of interesting but unconnected and irrelevant ideas. Assuming methodology continues to be accepted, it will be interesting to see if it demands associated teaching practice and/or microteaching — or if they, instead, are seen as the more important, demanding an accompanying 'support' course in methodology. It may be that teaching practice and microteaching are seen as ways to 'test' methodology, thereby increasing the credibility and face validity of all three.

Linguistics

Most ATTCs have one or more applied linguistics components. This may take the form of pedagogical concerns such as syllabus design, the origin and treatment of errors, and testing; sociolinguistics; and/or psycholinguistics. At SISU in 1987–88 we ran '[The Theory of] Second Language Learning' as a main course in the first term, this being the area of psycholinguistics most relevant to our participants. Once the group understood the concept (at first they thought they would be learning Russian or Japanese), this was welcomed as an unfamiliar but interesting, useful and important area of study.

The study of applied linguistics is rarely questioned; it fits nicely into 'knowing that', and the acquisition of knowledge, and even in the study of error, syllabus design and testing, the 'knowing how' can, for the time being, be put aside. Morrison (1988) describes applied linguistics as "a facet of the course that is seen as crucial by the Chinese for teacher development" — not a particularly 'Chinese' perception. Magee (1988) comments that *to a certain extent* the theory and practice of language teaching is applied linguistics.

More theoretical linguistics (historical descriptions of language, together with syntax, phonetics, phonology, morphology, semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis) is also often taught. One reason is to give the course some academic status. Though participants may sometimes object to the content of what they hear and have to do in linguistics, objections to doing linguistics *per se* are rare. Again, it is clearly 'knowing that' — and, further, it

is testable. Linguistics lectures also tend to correspond to traditional ideas of learning: the lecturer at the front of the class can be seen as 'fount of knowledge' on which the participants depend (Morrison, 1989).

There is, in Morrison's words, a "potential minefield" in "the over, or incautious, use of terminology or jargon". Predictable from Magee and Liu's principle of *remembering* rather than *understanding*, "Participants tend to learn the terms rather than understand the concepts that lie behind them and the practical applications they refer to" (Morrison, 1989).

At SISU, our participants strongly resisted a series of 'little exercises' — practical, investigative applications of linguistics. We had assumed that these thinking participants would find them interesting and useful; they clearly did not.

Linguistics may distract from rather than complement practical teaching skills and the pedagogic reasons underlying these. But, it can be justified in that it is, *in a sense*, the subject matter which English teachers are responsible for helping their learners learn — if linguistics is seen as the study of language and communication. Put simply, without being directly connectable to classroom practice, it can still deepen teachers' understanding of their subject — as well as of "the historical and central role of linguistics to the theory and practice of language teaching" (Magee, 1988).

Interestingly, the course content and methodology of ATTCs tends to create fewer problems for those involved (course participants, Chinese teachers, British teachers, Heads of Departments) than other ATTC-related issues. At the 1988 ATTC Conference, for example, of 35 recommendations by mixed groups of ATTC coordinators, teachers and graduates, only two concerned the syllabus:

- There should be some common ground in syllabuses in the form of methodology and applied linguistics courses . . .
- Different syllabuses should be used for different groups of participants. e.g., the syllabus for ESP teachers should be different from that for teachers of English majors.

The responses, as reported, were:

- Yang Xun [State Education Commission] . . . said that a

national syllabus, which should include common elements with local variations for different kinds of participants, was needed in order to evaluate the achievements of the courses and validate the credits . . .

- Seaton from the British Council . . . too stressed the necessity for a national syllabus which has a common core with local variations, that is, a central module with options for each project (Sunderland & Mu, 1988).

And at the State Education Commission/DDA Conference of January 1989, attended by British Council-recruited teachers, their Chinese colleagues, and ATTC coordinators, the group responsible for identifying 'wider objectives' for ATTCs proposed the 'development of a national ATTC syllabus'.

Yet there is still no such syllabus. Whether there will be one depends largely on the future development of ATTCs. The greatest need for a syllabus at present is for the one-year Diploma courses. While no 'common core curriculum' exists, comparison of these courses in terms of standards and areas of knowledge/experience remains difficult — and, accordingly, so do official recognition, pay rises and promotion.

FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

'Aid' in the form of foreign intervention in China's education system via British Council-recruited ATTC teachers can create "distortions . . . in terms of the expectations of the participants" (Magee & Liu, 1989) 'participants' here referring to everyone involved — not just the teachers being trained. Foreign involvement however has further influences, related to the different Chinese/British expectations of teacher training.

One characteristic of the ATTCs under discussion here is their 'Britishness'. This can cut several ways, many ATTC participants have never talked to a native speaker of English before. And foreigners in many areas of China are still stared at, and thought of as odd and as fundamentally different from Chinese. This must have implications for the effect of what we say and do when we teach, in that Western methods are likely to be expected to be somewhat strange — quite possibly interesting, but unlikely to be of much practical use. Western teaching methods

are thus very rarely seen as particularly relevant to China, or even having the *potential* to be relevant. The clearest implications may be for *methodology* as a subject, for the methodology of the course as a whole, and for the perceived relevance of British methods to EFL in China.

A further Western 'influence' is both on and through the Chinese counterparts who, having usually been involved with the ATTC, go to Britain for an MA course, then return to work on the ATTC. This tends to make them more sympathetic to a non-traditional methodology. A related characteristic has been the increasingly close cooperation of Chinese and foreign teachers, partly because of the counterparts' Western experience, but largely because of the unusual situation of Chinese and foreign teachers having and perceiving some common professional problems.

The presence of British teachers, within a cooperative teaching context, means discussions about if and how nationality affects who does what. The issue is not a simple one. 'British culture' courses, for example, may seem at first to be the province of the British teachers, but participants at the 'Teaching of Culture' workshop at the ATTC Conference of 1988 also noted that "Chinese teachers . . . were in a better position than British teachers to assess the current level of awareness of Chinese students" (Taunton, 1988). At the other extreme from demarcation-by-nationality is having everything Chinese-British team-taught — a solution we adopted largely at SISU. A second Conference discussion group recommended that "The returned counterparts and the British teachers should team-teach courses even though this may be more time-consuming . . ." and particularly that "Chinese teachers should be involved in teaching methodology, as this gives the course higher credibility" (Sansome & Du, 1988). Their exception was the productive skills, speaking and listening, which they felt should be taught by the British teachers. This group further recommend that a Chinese teacher be the leader of the project — which is now frequently the case.

There are also frequent discussions between Chinese and British ATTC teachers about whether ATTCs would be better off without British teachers — who tend to feel they should go, while Chinese teachers often feel they should stay. Sansome and Du's Conference discussion group noted that "the presence of a foreign teacher makes a course more 'saleable' ". This is probably a correct assessment.

For those ATTCs which are now continuing without British teachers, the Chinese counterparts will not have a particularly easy time, if they try to retain a 'British atmosphere' and the course's previous structure. Together, Chinese and British teachers helped each other in many ways not least of which is British credibility. A Chinese teacher talking about, and practising, Western methodology convincingly with a British teacher must give that British teacher and the methodology course extra credibility. But it may also be the case that a Chinese teacher can 'get away with' a lot more if she or he practises and teaches Western methodology on a course *taught also by Westerners*.

OBJECTIVES

What objectives and purposes have ATTCs been seen as having? Trainer training? Language improvement of teachers? The obtaining of a postgraduate qualification? All these — and others. One tends to be missing — objectives are rarely formulated in terms of the language and learning needs of the clients at the *end* of the chain. One reason for Maley's 1984 identification of "aims and objectives" as a "persistent problem area" was that "There seems to have been little consideration of the end users (i.e., the participants' own students) in [the] course descriptions" (1984).

There will of course always be many *perceived* objectives of in-service teacher training, if only because *everyone* involved has their own views on what the courses should be for. Again, should the objectives reflect the requirements of the participants' existing jobs, and doing them better, or different requirements?

Although the methodology, both general and specific, of ATTCs tends not to resemble 'traditional' EFL teaching it can succeed with participants who are invariably interested in and enjoy the 'new methods'. Yet this may not be what they were sent for. What do participants' *superiors* want? On the whole, it seems, as well as for the returned graduates to be grateful for being released and being more committed to their institution (Magee & Liu, 1989), for them to do the same job better through their own language improvement, without any particular change in their methodology.

Based on his follow-up visit to ATTC graduates in North-East China, Zhao Jiuling (1988) identifies four problem areas in the graduates' teaching situations: textbooks, traditional teaching

methods, students' unwillingness to use language communicatively, and existing tests, each of which reflect what graduates *have* to do on return to their institutions. He observes:

If this is the case, what we have been doing on the ATTC is really quite different from what the graduates of the ATTC are required to do when they are back in their own institutions. That is why when some graduates, like [Y], try to teach English in a way different from the traditional methodology, they have to do it 'secretly'. In addition, they are afraid that their colleagues would consider them 'proud' of being a graduate from an ATTC. The graduate in question described herself as 'in Rome, doing what the Romans don't do'.

ATTC teachers' objectives and even course participants' objectives, may then be different from those of the heads of departments.

We can find yet another purpose — mainly a participant one — in Morrison's (1988) comparison of aims of Western and Chinese teacher training (Figure 2). He identifies the Western aim as 'improvement of teaching skills', and the Chinese aims as language improvement, and *promotion*. He asks the following 'sensitive' question:

Are these teacher training courses to be used primarily to improve the standard of EFL teaching in China, or to provide an opportunity for individual advancement (not that this is necessarily a bad thing *per se*)?

Morrison notes that a reason for ATTC's 'individual advancement' role could be the relatively theoretical nature of the courses themselves; a possibility suggesting an interesting chicken-and-egg relationship.

Promotion as an objective can of course be exaggerated; participants must have a mixture of motives and teachers worldwide like promotion. And in China, where job mobility is much less than in the West, any possible way 'up' or 'out' will not be ignored.

In any case, promotion should not be disparaged as a motivating factor. Participants who have been promoted may be more able to bring about reform, if they wish to do so, and help

train others. On the SISU ATTC all the participants learned French as a second foreign language. We naturally hoped this would give them insights into the foreign language learning process — but, more fundamentally, they wanted promotion for which a second foreign language was required, and the ATTC teachers wanted to help them to get it.

One final point should be made. If in-service teacher training anywhere is to achieve any *pedagogical* purpose, the participants must care about their work, beyond consideration of improving their promotion prospects. Whether ATTC participants now really do care is questioned in a sobering piece by Du Jinjiang (p.000):

The past five years . . . have seen tremendous changes in virtually all aspects of our society. The unprecedented economic and political reforms have brought about numerous alterations in values and beliefs . . . Earlier in the 1980s . . . the designation of 'university teacher' was still fairly appealing and in a way prestigious . . . The general craving for English and an immediate improvement in teaching expertise was such that most other personal concerns simply receded to a relatively subsidiary place . . . Today . . . with the rampant formidable inflation, teachers have become painfully conscious of the devaluation of the intellect . . . Many teachers are pursuing jobs with the lightest responsibility but with the highest possible pay . . . Even the in-service trainees on courses like the ATTCs may well be lacking in motivation and professional commitment. A substantial proportion of them will simply leave the profession within a few years of qualifying when conditions permit.

And, as Magee and Liu (1989) note

There is . . . no national provision for tertiary teacher training certification. What degree is to be awarded to those who have the job of training future English teachers? In the context of the current lack of status afforded to teachers, this problem is acute.

China changes rapidly. And Du Jinjiang may be taking an unnecessarily pessimistic attitude — though he may have identified one important factor in the decline in applications for places on ATTCs. I will simply suggest that if participants care

about the work itself (and they may need support to do that), more objectives and purposes can be fulfilled than if they do not.

ATTC CONFERENCE OF 1988

I have made several references to the first ATTC Conference, held in Shanghai in May, 1988. This Conference was hosted by SISU. It was intended for all Chinese and British ATTC teachers from all ATTCs with British Council involvement. Also present were members of the State Education Commission, the British Council (i.e., both the 'policy makers') and the Shanghai Higher Education Bureau, as well as people involved in ATTC administration, ATTC graduates, and British and Chinese teachers involved in other forms of teacher training. This Conference was something of a landmark in ATTC development in particular and Chinese-British teaching projects in general, bringing together not only Chinese and British, but also different ATTCs. It was timely in that after a few years of ATTC existence many important issues had come to the fore, issues which could be suitably aired and discussed in some depth by such a gathering of many of those directly concerned.

The Conference was not only concerned with what was and should be taught, and how — though there were sessions on linguistics, curriculum design, the teaching of British culture, methodology, and microteaching and teaching practice. It was also concerned with policy and other central administrative and structural issues. The final session was *Recommendations to Policy Makers from Participants and Responses to the Recommendations* which could be classified into eight categories:

- Types of teacher training courses, certification and recognition
- The continuation of existing courses and the development of further courses
- Continuing British Council support for institutions which no longer have full-time British Council lecturers
- Participants: admission, motivation and further study
- Counterparts
- The syllabus
- Miscellaneous ATTC-related recommendations
- General recommendations

I look only at the first two, since they illustrate a Chinese variant of a general problem area of in-service EFL teacher training: that of who training should be for (the most or the least competent, in language and/or teaching ability?), and, relatedly, the balance of and relationship between practice and academic theory, the level of the course, and certification.

Many previously untrained WPS students have now had some teacher training this being one reason for the decline in demand for ATTC places. There is also a desire for and problem with promotion. In Spring 1985, the same time as the State Education Commission had announced that teachers could be promoted to lecturer if they had an ATTC certificate, many institutions said they needed a qualification in a second foreign language to get promotion — and that to gain the qualification the teacher had to return to his/her workplace for an exam. Worse, not only does an ATTC diploma not automatically lead to promotion, doing an ATTC can actually *hinder* promotion prospects.

Zhao's follow-up visit to graduates in North-East China revealed cases of this, as did the follow-up questionnaire of SISU graduates of 1986–87. Responses to "Has the ATTC hindered you in any way as far as [responsibilities, promotion and/or a pay rise] are concerned?" included:

- The school doesn't seem likely to allow me to do an MA since I have got an ATTC diploma.
- Missed the promotion when I was in the ATTC. Therefore, I am not a lecturer now.
- Yes. The year of my study in the ATTC is not included when calculating my years of teaching experience, which is important for my promotion.

These sad responses should not be exaggerated: many ATTC graduates *were* promoted to lecturer, and given a pay rise. But there remains a clear demand for longer, higher level courses *with clear and prestigious certification* — an MA rather than a 'diploma' which is not standardized and has no clear status. This would vastly improve promotion prospects. Accordingly, MA courses are what some ATTCs are becoming, or have become. Yet there is still a need for in-service training of teachers who need language improvement and help with basic methodology. Hence four recommendations were put forward:

- There should be a national certificate for 1-year teacher-training programmes, to be called a *Certificate* or *Diploma in TEFL*.
This certificate should be nationally recognized, recognition taking the form of a pay rise and/or promotion; attendance on the programme should *definitely* not lead to any form of decrease in responsibilities.
- An *MA in TEFL* should also be recognized and formalized. If the existing framework of MA in Language and Literature must be maintained, the degree awarded for teacher training-related courses should be called an *MA in Language and Literature (TEFL)*.
- The *Diploma* courses should continue in *their present form* in order to serve those teachers, especially from remote areas, who might not be admitted onto MA courses, due to such courses' high level of entry requirements, but who are in very great need of training and who can do a very important job of spreading new ideas in remote areas.
- New teacher training programmes, of both Diploma/Certificate and Masters degree courses, should continue to be developed.

The 'Responses to the Recommendations' were clear:

- Yang Xun from the State Education Commission . . . said that in order to motivate the ATTC participants the one-year programme will eventually be phased out and will be replaced by a one-and-a-half-year pre-MA programme. One reason for this is that it is difficult for one-year programme students to get a pay rise
- Seaton from the British Council . . . was in favour of conferring an *MA in TEFL* to ATTC participants (Mu & Sunderland, 1988)

The time may well have come for Certificate and MA courses in TEFL. But it would seem a retrograde step if this disqualifies those "teachers from remote areas . . . who are in very great need of training" from the more academic courses while not providing a less-academic alternative.

Directions

The development of and changes in the ATTCs since their inception can be summarized in the models (Figure 3).

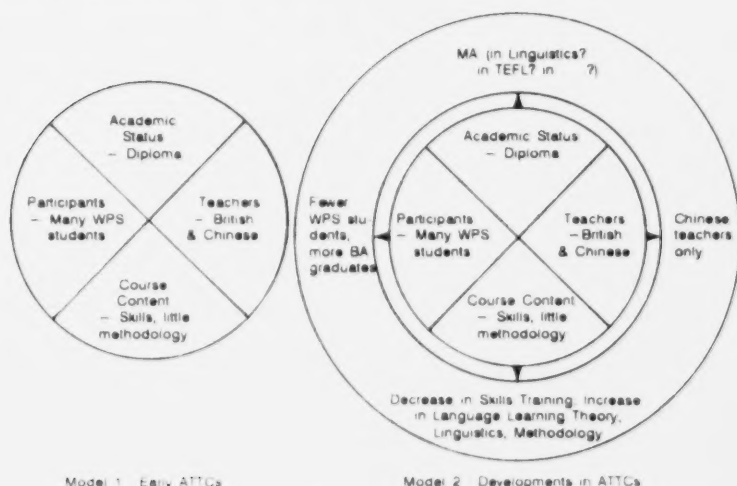


Figure 3 Development of and changes in ATTCs (Zhao, 1988)

As we have seen, most crucial to many is the 'academic status' segment of these two models: Diploma or MA? (or now Certificate). ATTCs are currently in a state of flux: established one-year ATTCs are being brought to an end and new ones started.

In the long run, it seems that ATTC will be in the form of two-year MA courses, or, as Yang Xun indicated, one-and-a-half-year pre-MA programmes. These may well include methodology components, as some now do, though not with the emphasis that methodology has received in several one-year ATTCs. With this de-emphasis the need for teaching practice is likely to be questioned, or perhaps simply not raised, and the whole course likely to have a much more theoretical, academic, research-oriented emphasis. This will facilitate promotion of the more linguistically and academically competent teachers, which may well help the multiplan effect to operate, but will do little to help

those many teachers from remote, rural areas who need both language and teaching skills improvement.

Other possible future developments, as suggested at the 1989 ODA/State Education Commission Conference might include national specification of entry requirements for ATTC students, a Beijing-based 'ATTC coordinator', and increased connections with ATTCs without British involvement.

Conclusion

To train trainers? To improve teachers' language? To help secondary school students and undergraduates learn English more efficiently? To equip trainees with a rich, learning-facilitating methodology? To help bring about promotion and pay rises? To give linguistically competent teachers a sound grasp of applied linguistics? All have been and still are valid objectives for ATTCs, in their new and old forms.

The initial ATTCs were of necessity exploratory and their aims tentative. It is now the case that they can be more explicit and coordinated, in terms of syllabus and certification — whether they are run as 'projects', with British Council involvement, or without. Ultimately, of course, priorities will be determined by the ATTC graduates themselves, now numbering several thousand, and those Chinese teachers who were once 'counterparts' of British 'experts' — many of whom from both groups will rise in the ranks of the teaching profession and perhaps become policy makers themselves. It is to be hoped that the foreign intervention of the 1980s has not been, in the words of Magee and Liu (1989) a "temporary distortion", but, despite the different expectations raised, has been largely positive in terms of mutually enhanced understanding, project continuity and educational development.

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Teacher Training in the PRC: Influence of Sociocultural Factors

Helen Oatey

INTRODUCTION

Most of the papers at this conference deal with the sociocultural issues faced by teachers working in Britain. This paper is concerned with the other side of the coin: the problems that teachers working overseas may have to handle as a result of socio-cultural differences. It deals with one specific country, China, but discusses problems that may also arise in other teaching contexts.

Over the last ten years or so, an increasing number of native speakers of English have gone to China to teach, and many of them have thoroughly enjoyed the experience. However, according to Maley (1983), large numbers of them return from China "with dampened enthusiasm, feelings of disappointment and in some cases bitterness and rancour." The Chinese, too, are often dissatisfied; they feel that many foreigners do not understand the Chinese context, and they question the effectiveness of their teaching. This paper addresses this problem, and proposes that many of these feelings of disappointment on the part of both Chinese and of Westerners, stem from socio-cultural differences. It examines two main aspects: the influence of differing education perspectives on the perceived effectiveness of teaching, and the influence of cross-cultural factors on interpersonal relationships. The content of the paper is based mainly on the experiences I gained between 1981 and 1988

Paper presented at BALEAP (British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes) Conference, March 1989.

when I was working on a series of teacher training courses at Shanghai Jiaotong University.

My descriptions of the sociocultural characteristics of British and Chinese societies are naturally the result of generalizations. I do not wish to imply by this that all individuals within both cultures conform to the norms described; many exhibit differing opinions or behaviour patterns. This is particularly true of Chinese educational perspectives. There have been a large number of changes in China recently that have affected education, and as Wu (1983) points out, there is not a "cut and dried 'Chinese position' in EFL". Nevertheless, I believe that it is still possible to identify some characteristic features of the two cultures, including their educational perspectives, and that a clearer understanding of these features may help educational programmes involving Britain and China to run more smoothly.

DIFFERING EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

James (1980) has pointed out that the norms which govern people's academic attitudes and behaviour may vary from culture to culture. And a number of writers (e.g., Maley, 1983; Light & Works, 1984) have commented on the need for teachers to take such cross-cultural differences into account in their teaching. In this section I describe the influence that such factors had on the teacher training programmes run by Shanghai Jiaotong University from 1980 to 1988.

Background Information

In 1980 the Chinese State Education Commission (then known as the Ministry of Education) launched a series of retraining programmes for tertiary level teachers of English, and Jiaotong University in Shanghai was chosen as one of the centres of retraining. The first product ran for three years, and comprised six 6-month training courses. In 1983 it was replaced by a five-year project which offered one-year training courses at a more advanced level. The core components which Jiaotong University offered for these two types of courses were as follows:

1980-1983: Language Improvement
Teaching Methodology

EST (1980-81 only)

1983-1988: Teaching Methodology
 Applied Linguistics
 Descriptive Linguistics
 Language Improvement

The syllabuses were jointly designed by British Council recruited teachers and by senior members of staff in the university's Foreign Languages Department. Nearly all of the teaching was done by the British teachers, but from 1985 onwards some of the Chinese members of staff started taking over some of the teaching responsibilities after having spent a year studying in Britain.

Comparison of Chinese and British Views

In a traditional Chinese classroom the emphasis is on knowledge processing. As Zhang (1984) explains, "Acquiring knowledge is the central part of the learning process". There is also an implicit belief in ultimate truth: ideas or explanations are thought to be either 'right' or 'wrong'. The teacher's task is to convey this truth, and the students' task is to memorize it. Typically this means that teachers will expound a particular textbook; the content of their lectures corresponds to the content of this book, and students know that this is what they are expected to memorize and reproduce in examinations.

This educational perspective corresponds to that referred to by James (1980) as Type 1 and can be summarized in Figure 1.

Main goal of teaching and learning:	— Comprehension and storage of 'correct' knowledge
Teachers' main roles:	— Suppliers of knowledge Directors of learning: students are given specific instructions as to what they should read and memorize
Students' main roles:	— Memorizers of the knowledge conveyed by the teachers — Reproducers of this knowledge

Figure 1. A Chinese perspective of the learning process

With regard to foreign language learning, this emphasis on knowledge results in a primary concern with mastering the linguistic code on formal system. Lessons entitled Intensive Reading are used to achieve this, and in them the teacher gives a phrase-by-phrase and sentence-by-sentence explication of the grammar and vocabulary of a written text. Both the teachers' and the students' tasks are clear: teachers must explain clearly the rules of English grammar and how particular words are used; students must memorize these grammar rules and the meanings and usage of the new vocabulary items. These intensive reading lessons form the core of a language course, and other components, such as listening comprehension and extensive reading are typically regarded as supplementary in nature, and hence of relatively minor importance.

This approach to education in general and foreign language learning in particular is quite different from the typical British approach. In subject matter courses in Britain there is less of a belief in an absolute truth. The existence of conflicting theories and findings is regarded as normal, and the lack of a final answer to research questions is seen as a stimulus for further research. The purpose of study is typically the exploration and evaluation of issues rather than the grasp of a final solution, and a teacher's task is to help stimulate and encourage this exploratory process in students. In other words, the focus of teaching is not so much on the conveyance of knowledge — but rather on discussion and evaluation. As a result, there is not a set body of knowledge that students can simply learn from a single textbook. Normally they have to read widely, comparing and contrasting the different evidence and opinions put forward by different writers. Teachers do not control closely what students read, but simply expect them to do sufficient independent reading to be able to argue their viewpoint convincingly.

This Type 3 (James, 1980) perspective can be summarized in Figure 2.

Main goal of teaching and learning	— Exploration and evaluation of ideas and problems
Teachers' main roles	— Stimulators and advisers
Students' main roles	— Investigators of problems and evaluators of ideas

Figure 2. A British perspective of the learning process

In terms of foreign language learning, most British EFL teachers adopt some form of communicative approach. They normally place greater emphasis on skills mastery than on mastery of the formal system *per se*, and the classroom is more learner-centred than in China. Students are encouraged to work in pairs or in groups, and to participate actively in a variety of communicative activities.

These different educational perspectives affected trainees' responses both to the British teachers' teaching approach, and to the design and content of the course. Their reactions are discussed below.

Trainees' Response to British Teaching

Although the language improvement component of the teacher training courses was basically well received, certain problems did emerge with it, especially on the early courses. Some students complained that they were 'not really learning very much'. When this dissatisfaction was brought into the open, it became apparent that the differing approaches to language learning held by British and Chinese teachers were at the root of the problem. The British teachers were taking a process approach; they were trying to improve the students' language skills, especially their oral skills, and so included a lot of activities such as role play and group discussions. The students, on the other hand, were expecting a product of orientation: they wanted the British teachers to explain difficult points of grammatical or lexical usage, ones which they had not been able to find the answer to so far.

In addition, some of the older participants seemed rather confused as to what was expected of them. They were used to memorizing vocabulary lists and reciting texts, yet their textbooks on this course did not contain any vocabulary lists and their teachers never asked them to recite anything. They felt unsure as to how to study on their own and to prepare for the lessons, and became nervous when asked to take part in any activities in class for which they were not prepared.

With regard to the teaching approach used for the subject matter courses such as applied linguistics and teaching methodology, once again there were problems. The trainees found the conflicting theories and explanations very unsettling, and kept asking which was correct. They missed the security of a single textbook which contained the content of the lectures and which

could be memorized for examination purposes, and asked instead to be given the lecture scripts. They felt that these would not only help reduce the language difficulties that they were experiencing, but would also provide them with all the knowledge they would need for passing the examinations. They were also confused by the quantity of references given to them: they did not know which, or how many to read, and felt pressurized by the volume of reading that seemed to be expected of them.

Trainees' Response to the Course

As to the trainees' response to the design and content of the courses, students were very dissatisfied with the components of the early courses. At that time there were three main components: language improvement, teaching methodology and English for science and technology. After a few months it emerged that the students disliked the latter two components, and wanted them to be dropped from the programme. Instead they wanted more language improvement classes and a course in literature.

Gradually it became apparent that sociocultural differences were again at the root of the problem, and were having an influence in two main ways. Firstly, they were influencing people's expectations of what the course would entail. British teachers thought that a teacher training course meant 'training teachers how to teach', and so they designed the course to have a strong emphasis on methodology. Chinese teachers, on the other hand, associated teacher training with language improvement and were not expecting to study methodology at all (Maley, 1983; Oatey, 1984).

Secondly, sociocultural factors affected the participants' evaluation of the relevance and usefulness of the component courses. Initially, few trainees believed that methodology was worth studying: either they were satisfied with their current teaching methods and approach, or else they doubted that any change was practical. They argued that many circumstantial factors, such as the nature of Chinese examinations and textbooks, and the conservative expectations of their students, prevented them from making any methodological changes in their teaching. On the other hand, they felt that literature would be extremely beneficial to them. This was not, in fact, for practical purposes (very few of them actually taught literature), but for prestige

reasons. Literature is highly regarded in China.

The influence of the prestige of a subject emerged again when the one-year course was being designed. The trainees' greatest need was for practical training in teaching methodology but the prestige associated with 'knowledge' courses had a very strong influence. By this time (1984 and later), the trainees had begun to appreciate the value of a methodology course, and yet a number of senior Chinese teachers still looked down on it. They regarded it as an easy course because it was practical. They felt it was inferior in status to teach the more abstract theoretical courses, and wanted to remove it from the programme altogether, or else to make it optional.

Adjustments

Unfortunately, it is not possible within the scope of this paper to explain in detail the ways in which we handled these problems. In general, though we adopted the approach advocated by Wu (1983): adjustment, rather than dogmatism, compromise or capitulation. We did not stick rigidly to our original approach, but neither did we simply adopt the suggestions made. We tried to work out what would really be best in the Chinese context: sometimes that meant a major adjustment to our course and our teaching; sometimes it meant persevering with our original approach; and sometimes it meant making some minor adjustments. Finding the appropriate balance in this was not easy, and any success we had was the result of long and frequent heart-searching and discussion. Eventually, though we were able to develop a course which was acceptable to all concerned and which gained a high reputation throughout China. (For more specific information on the adjustments that we made, see Oatey, 1988; and for some specific suggestions on a communicative approach that will suit a Chinese context, see Scovel, 1983 and Maley, 1984.)

CROSS-CULTURAL FACTORS AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Building good relationships with people is never easy, but when the individuals concerned are from different cultures, the problem is even more complex. Every speech community has its own norms

of interaction, and these may differ in various ways from those of other communities. In cross-cultural communication, these socio-cultural differences can be a major source of relationship problems, yet the parties concerned may be unaware of the real root of the difficulty.

Since Chinese and Western cultures are so different, it is only natural that foreign teachers in China may sometimes inadvertently offend their Chinese hosts, and vice versa. In this second half of my paper I explore this issue.

Conceptions of Power and Solidarity

Foreign teachers working in China normally interact at work with the groups of Chinese people given in Figure 3.

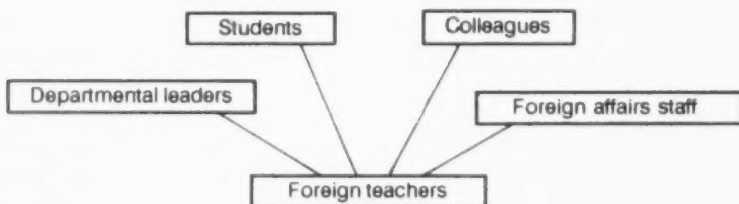


Figure 3. Typical network of professional relationships for foreign teachers in China

Every institution in China which employs foreigners has an office or section which handles non-academic matters relating to their terms of employment. This is known as the Foreign Affairs Office. The Foreign Affairs staff are responsible for handling many practical issues that concern foreigners, such as accommodation or transportation to and from work.

The network of contacts shown involves foreign teachers in relationships which differ in terms of power and solidarity. I am using these terms in the social psychological sense. By power, I mean the relative status of the participants, in other words, whether they are equal in status or whether one is subordinate or superior; by solidarity I mean the intimacy of their relationship, how close or distant it is. Cultural factors can play an important role in influencing people's perceptions of power and solidarity in their relationships.

Teacher-Student Relationships

In Chinese society, students typically show great respect for their teachers. They believe there is a considerable status gap between them, and so they tend to be very deferential. The following behaviour patterns are therefore common among Chinese students. They open doors for teachers, help them carry their books, clean the blackboard, and generally prepare the classroom for the lesson. They avoid embarrassing teachers by making them lose face, and so may refrain from asking difficult questions or expressing disagreement. Zhang (1984) maintains that Chinese students may also avoid talking too much in order to show their respect for the teacher.

At the same time, though, the degree of solidarity between teachers and students is typically high, they frequently show great concern for each other, and may pay social visits from time to time, especially if one is sick or in need of help. In this way teachers and students develop a close bond which may last for many years.

In Britain, it seems to me, there is less status difference between teachers and students, but greater distance. Although teachers and students may develop a friendly, informal relationship, they usually show less mutual concern for each other than is seen in Chinese society. The majority of Western students show little interest in their teachers' welfare, and although Western teachers are often very concerned about their students, this concern stems primarily from their sense of professional responsibility, and thus is rather different in kind from that seen in China.

When Western teachers go to China to teach, it is not usually difficult for them to adjust to these differences. On the contrary, they are usually delighted by their students and find them a joy to teach. However, from the Chinese students' point of view, the adjustment may not be quite so easy. Teachers and students are supposed to show mutual respect for each other, and Western teachers may inadvertently convey a lack of respect through their ignorance of Chinese norms for teachers' behaviour. On our teacher training course in Shanghai, for example, we found that students were particularly offended by the following types of behaviour: the teacher sitting *on* the desk at the front while teaching, instead of sitting *at* the desk or standing; the teacher sharply criticizing a student in front of others. Moreover, practising an appointment system was alien to most of them. They

felt it conveyed an impression of distance, especially when the teacher came straight to the professional point without first exchanging lengthy preliminary social courtesies.

Foreign Teacher-Chinese Colleague Relationships

Although foreign teachers normally get on well with their students, their relationship with their Chinese colleagues may be more problematic. In my experience, a key factor influencing how well Chinese and Western colleagues can relate to each other is their personal perceptions of relative power. This is not simply a cultural issue but also a social one.

From a hierarchical point of view, two colleagues may have equal status, but this does not mean that they *regard* each other as equals. As Wu (1983) points out, some foreigners go to China with a sense of superiority. In China their official status is *zhuanjia*, which literally means 'expert', and unfortunately they may act as though this is literally true. They may look down on their Chinese colleagues, and belittle their teaching expertise by acting as though they alone have the final answer to questions of teaching. Their perception of the purpose of their job has an important influence: they have often been selected by an organization such as the British Council to help raise the standard English teaching in China, and so, consciously or subconsciously, they may believe that they alone possess the 'good news'. They may not realize the extent to which their ideas need modifying if they are to be maximally effective in a Chinese context, and so they may cause offence by conveying an air of superiority.

Chinese staff, on the other hand, may feel threatened by the presence of a foreign teacher. They may feel ashamed of their English level, especially if they are older teachers with little experience of communicating orally in English, or they may fear the methodological innovations that foreign teachers often advocate. As a result, they may try to avoid contact with the foreign teacher, fearing, for example, that if they communicate unsuccessfully, they would lose too much face, or they may strongly oppose the proposed changes and resent the foreigner's presence.

Foreigners' Privileges

The whole issue of power and solidarity is made more complex in China by the existence of foreigners' privileges. In Chinese society, guests are typically treated with tremendous respect; they

are nearly always given the best, such as best choice at a banquet and the most comfortable room in a hotel or office building. This inevitably creates a gap of some sort between Chinese and foreigners, and although Chinese seem to accept it remarkably well, it nevertheless complicates relationship issues.

Expressing Feedback and Criticism

In Chinese society, *face* is extremely important, and plays an important role in the way in which people convey criticism. Negative feedback threatens a person's face, and so it is rarely expressed directly. Instead, the problem is mentioned to a third party who acts as an intermediary between the two, conveying as much or as little of the complaint as she/he deems necessary. In the West, however, third parties are not usually used in this way; if a message is passed indirectly, people may feel hurt that they were not approached directly.

This difference in approach can easily lead to misunderstandings and/or offence, as we experienced on our teacher training courses in Shanghai. In 1980–81, when the first training courses were taking place, British teachers were under the impression for several months that everything was fine. Their students' graciousness misled them into thinking that all was basically well; in fact, complaints and criticisms were being voiced via indirect channels, as shown in Figure 4.

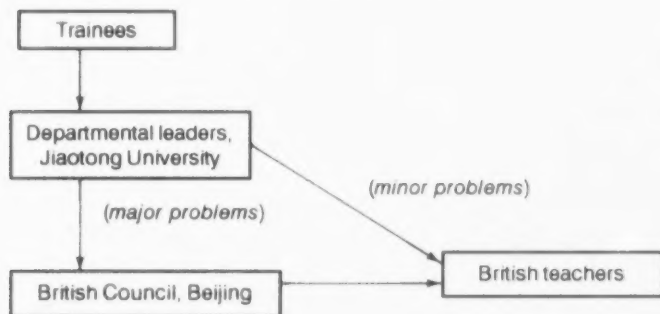


Figure 4. Feedback channels

There were two consequences of this. Firstly, there was

considerable delay in making necessary adjustments to the programme. Secondly, the foreign teachers were hurt that no-one felt able to discuss the issues openly with them. In later courses we found that Chinese colleagues could play a very useful role here. We encouraged regular feedback sessions between the trainees and the Chinese teachers, and in this way, the British teachers were able to hear about students' reactions without any undue delay.

The reverse problem also arose at times. British teachers were sometimes felt to be too direct in their comments and criticisms, especially during professional discussions with colleagues and departmental leaders. Sometimes they caused offence by taking a firm but contrary position on a particular issue, and had to learn to soften their remarks.

Difficulties in Interpreting Pragmatic Force

Both of the above issues — conceptions of power and solidarity, and the expression of feedback and criticism — are aspects of a broader problem, that of cross-cultural pragmatic failure. The discussion has so far related mainly to socio-pragmatic issues (Thomas, 1983), but in this final section I want to concentrate on pragmalinguistic problems. I shall focus on one main area of difficulty that foreigners often experience in China: identifying the 'true' meaning of people's response to their requests.

As Rubin (1983) has pointed out there are many different ways of refusing a request, and different cultures may vary in their preferences for certain forms. In China people hesitate to say 'no' directly, to avoid making the person lose face. Instead they may use phrases such as the following:

'We need to discuss the matter.'

'I'll think about it and let you know.'

Foreigners usually find it very difficult to identify the real meaning of responses like this, and some may not even recognize the ambiguity. They take the responses literally, and then feel annoyed when it later transpires that their request has been refused. As Maley (1983) explains, a foreigner needs to learn that such responses are "a reflection of the embarrassment his host experiences at having to refuse a request, rather than the outright untruths he takes them to be." The problem is particularly common in interactions between Western teachers and foreign affairs staff.

To complicate the issue, there are other circumstances in China when 'no' is a common first response to a request, and yet is a negotiable 'no'. In public places in China, such as in shops or offices, the first response to a request is typically negative, no matter what the person has asked for. In a shop, for instance, the assistant is likely to say first of all that a particular item is out of stock; and at the national airline office, the customer will probably be told initially that there are no tickets available. However, this refusal is not necessarily a final 'no'. In Britain, requests for such concrete items are met with straightforward responses: 'I'm sorry, we're out of stock' or 'the plane is full' mean just what they say. In China, however, this is not necessarily the case. The requested item may be in very short supply, and customers may need to 'persuade' the clerk to sell it to them. In similar circumstances, Chinese people typically ignore the initial refusal and proceed to explain why they really need the item. This perseverance often pays off and the item is produced. However, foreigners find it notoriously difficult to work out when 'no' is negotiable in this way, and often become frustrated and angry over such matters.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have drawn attention to some of the misunderstandings that can result from the sociocultural differences between the British and Chinese cultures, and some of the problems that British teachers may therefore face when working in China. I do not wish to imply by this that international programmes are doomed to failure or are beset by endless difficulties. On the contrary, they are often very successful, and my own experience in Shanghai was extremely positive. Our programme was well-received by the trainees, and several of the British staff stayed for a number of years because they felt professionally satisfied. Nevertheless, this is not always the case, and any 'success' is not usually achieved without effort. As Porter (1983) says, "cultural differences must be faced by both the Chinese and the foreigners if constructive and helpful teaching is going to take place." I believe open discussion is one valuable way of facing these differences.

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Some Reflections on Advanced EFL Teacher Training in China

Du Jinjiang

What I should like to do in this paper is to reflect on two inherently related issues concerning the postgraduate-level training of advanced EFL teachers in China, which, among others, have become prominent over the past few years: social constraints, and trainees' language proficiency. I think it appropriate to present the paper on this occasion because in a certain sense the ATTC projects are representative of the current major trends in the profession and our hope is that, especially with the presence of responsible officials from both the State Education Commission and the British Council, the experiences and insights pooled at the conference can contribute positively to the further development of China's advanced teacher education.

SOCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The first issue is about the social constraints upon training. This has understandably received relatively little attention so far, because our practising teacher trainers tend to find themselves allowed the most freedom to exercise their professional expertise only within the confines of the 'core components' of a training course. As for the prime elements of the situation, including the social factors that concern us most here, since these do not belong to the components of the training course, our trainers in general

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would rather take them as something beyond their concern and interest, even though they are by no means unaware of the powerful influence of these elements on their professions.

We believe that this issue has now become too conspicuous to be disregarded, especially by the policy-makers higher up and the planners of specific training courses. As is commonplace to all those with experience in teacher training, the dynamic nature of the training requires a reassessment of the training courses from time to time in order to keep them in line with current developments in all surrounding areas. So in any attempt to reassess our teacher training programmes, one should not forget to take into account the latest social developments in China.

The past five years — the period in which the ATTCS were initiated and pushed forward — have seen tremendous changes in virtually all aspects of our society. The unprecedented economic and political reforms have brought about numerous alterations in values and beliefs, which find expression in people's changing attitudes towards various social activities. In education, for instance, despite the government's effort to inject new life into it through the adoption of a series of positive measures, there has been an obvious growth of disillusionment among educators due mainly to the shoe-string on which schools and universities are expected to be run. In sharp contrast to the thriving private enterprises and the proud wealthy upstarts all over the country, most of our state-fed educational institutions and our teachers are being reduced to a helpless plight.

Let us make a quick comparison between the scene of the early 1980s and the scene today. Earlier in the 1980s, as a result of the 're-emancipation' of the mind, there was a blossoming of enthusiasm in almost every field to do with English. Organized on a national basis by the then Ministry of Education, short-term training courses for university teachers of English conducted by foreign experts were widely acclaimed. Most teachers, old and young, considered it something of a privilege to be allowed a chance to attend such a course, although at that time none of these courses actually led to any qualification like a diploma or degree that could be of practical use to the trainees. The designation of 'university teacher' was still fairly appealing and in a way prestigious, and many of our top undergraduates showed little hesitation in accepting teaching posts. The general craving for more English and an immediate improvement in teaching expertise was such that most other personal concerns simply

receded to a relatively subsidiary place. And it was under such circumstances that the plan of starting ATTCS was formulated. It was only natural that the primary concern of the plan at that time was with the staffing and material resources.

Today, however, things have changed so drastically that we are virtually on the threshold of an educational crisis, so to speak. With the rampant formidable inflation, teachers have become painfully conscious of the devaluation of intellect. They cannot but rack their brains to find a way out and thus to fare better. Now even the most enterprising and hard-working of them are unable to resist this sweeping tendency, and have to descend gradually from their 'ivory tower' to the world of 'practicality', by which is meant the earning of a little more money by their limited humble means. In consequence, many teachers are pursuing jobs with the lightest responsibility but with the highest possible pay.

As the job related to, say postgraduate teacher training courses, they tend to be evaded simply because they are extremely demanding and unrewarding materially. Our undergraduates, as well as their parents, are so scared by the notoriously low status of teachers that things have run into a sadly ironical state: on the one hand, parents all wish to get good teachers to teach their children, but on the other hand, hardly any of them would like their children to be teachers after graduation. Those who apply and enroll are scarcely the most gifted and promising ones with first-rate undergraduate records. By the time they complete the course, teaching for them is often relegated to the position of one of the last jobs they want to take up. Even the in-service trainees on the courses like the ATTCS may well be lacking in motivation and professional commitment. A substantial proportion of them simply leave the profession within a few years of qualifying when conditions permit. This of course further dampens the trainer's work initiative which is already at stake. So it is no exaggeration to say that the changed situation has now become a tangible threat to the normal running of the teacher training courses.

Beyond doubt the present state of affairs is grave and we can have little confidence that things will be significantly improved in few years ahead. Until the teacher's status becomes substantially higher in society, there will be little hope for all-round fundamental changes in China's teacher education. Yet we know full well that teacher training courses of all sorts will still be carried out. What does this imply then? Most importantly, it implies that any evaluation of the current teacher training

programmes without regard to the growing influence of the above-mentioned socio-economic factors would be lame and misleading, for many problems with the training courses should be, and in fact can be, accounted for by these constraints. Take, for example, the low level of involvement of Chinese teachers in the ATTCs projects, a problem which has caused considerable anxiety and frustration particularly among our British colleagues. Generally the blame is cast on a weak administration. But as I see it, the root of the problem is to be found in the lack of motivation on the part of the Chinese teachers, which in itself is a constant headache for the administrator. By saying this, of course, we are not shifting the blame to teachers, since most of them are in an awkward dilemma. What I want to suggest is that maximum allowance needs to be made for the unsatisfactory situation and neither the Chinese nor the British side should expect anything more under such severe social constraints. Only with this attitude can we have some sense of satisfaction out of the tremendous work we have done, and only with this attitude can we keep up our spirits to doggedly yet sensibly continue our task of teacher training in China. Meanwhile, however, we pin much of our hope for timely improvement of the situation on the government, for in the final analysis, only the government is in a position to alter the entire scene.

As for what specific measures could be taken within the constraints to help improve the situation, I would not pretend to have an answer. But one thing seems to strike me as important if we want to retain the attraction of ATTCs and similar courses. It is to transform them to postgraduate courses leading to an MA in TEFL (or in Applied Linguistics). This will at least make them more appealing and more rewarding to our young teachers. After all, a postgraduate degree does make some difference in the career of a professional, be he or she a teacher or non-teacher.

TRAINEES' LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The second issue that deserves discussion is the typical trainee's low level of English proficiency. It might seem odd at first to relate such an issue to the ATTCs, for the name of these courses itself suggests an aim of providing special *advanced* training for *advanced* teachers of English, which implies that the trainee is supposed to have a sound command of the language already even

before coming to the course, and what he or she needs on the course is no more than some training in teaching techniques and relevant theories. Unfortunately the reality is far from this ideal situation. As a logical consequence of the social constraints discussed earlier, not a few of our trainees come into the course with a rather poor command of the language, much to the disappointment of the trainers.

Here of course there is a question of what is a sufficient command of English — a question that allows different answers. One British teacher gave different comments on the English of the same group of trainees during the first encounter, at an informal meeting, not knowing that the group were teacher trainees he was soon to teach himself, he kept praising them with 'Your English is pretty good'. But a few months later when he had been in close contact with them on the training course, he complained to me, 'Well, some of them even have problems in making sentences.' So in fact he was applying a double standard, but he was right in that he knew that a good teacher of English should have a far better command of the language than, say, an ordinary tourist guide. From my point of view, it may be reasonable to define a teacher's 'sufficient command' as not only competence-error-free in the classroom but also valid as a linguistic model for the learners he or she is to teach. Stevens (1973) has this to say on the importance of a sufficient command of the language for a language teacher:

"The teacher of a language is the learner's model, especially as far as the spoken language is concerned, and if the teacher's command of the language is inadequate, the learner's achievement will be impaired. Learners, including children, have a pretty good general idea of their teacher's standard, even though they themselves may be complete beginners. It is a source of discouragement (and therefore a constraint upon learning) for a learner to have a teacher whose command of the language is inadequate, who makes obvious errors in the classroom, who is uncertain about meaning and grammatical patterns, who has no confidence in his own grasp of the language. Consequently the skills component of a teacher-training course must ensure that the teacher's command of English (or whatever language he is teaching) is at least adequate for classroom purpose. *This ought to be a make-or-break requirement*, since the teacher

without an adequate command of the language is probably wasting his own time and that of his pupils, and he may be bruising their general enthusiasm as learners into the bargain."

As Strevens is referring chiefly to teaching of young school pupils, it follows then that although ours is an 'advanced' training course by name, if the trainee's language competence is not up to par, particularly when we have no alternative but to accept things as they are instead of acting on a make-or-break basis, the only sensible and positive path is of course to expand and enhance the language skills component on the course, even though this may be done at the cost of some of the 'theory' component, which is of less immediate significance to teaching. It is always better, I believe, to turn out some usable black-and-white TV sets than to produce glossy colour TV sets that do not actually work.

One can easily predict that a reinforcement of language skills training would inevitably affect the prestige of the course, and therefore would probably meet with certain psychological resistance from some trainees who tend to over-rate their language proficiency. While this may be something that cannot be helped, there is certainly work that can be done to make more language skills training easier for the trainees to accept. What is most important here is to positively lead them to an awareness of their own problem of inadequacy in language skills, and an understanding that their confidence in teaching (and learning) could be strengthened through their conscious effort to perfect themselves on the course. Experience shows that many trainees are quite ready to cooperate as long as they realize that the training is designed for their own good. In fact, many trainees come in only with a vague intention to 'improve my English so I can become a more qualified teacher'. Though such an attitude has been subject to certain mockery and criticism, it can be a good basis for strengthening the skills component on the course.

The form of training may vary with the different needs of specified trainees, but labels like 'Study Skills' and 'Academic Skills' are among the useful and acceptable umbrella terms which cover a great variety of activities. It is noticeable that our colleagues in Shanghai International Studies University this year had a successful two-week intensive study-skills course prior to the one-year in-service training course (Sunderland *et al.*, 1988). Perhaps a follow-up of specific skill training spread over a longer

period with a focus on accuracy would be useful and revealing. And if the tackling of the trainee's own language weaknesses could be married to the process of studying linguistic theories, it would hopefully be even more fruitful. For example, from a course in English phonetics and phonology, the trainee may be led to a self analysis of any phonetic peculiarities in his or her own speech to alert him or her to keep perfecting his or her own pronunciation.

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CHAPTER 7

The Past and the Future

Y. F. Dzau

To people outside China, what happened in Tian An Men Square on June 4, 1989 was a surprise. Friends of China were shocked and saddened by the death of so many young students, civilians, housewives and children. Overseas Chinese, who had always looked upon China as their homeland and had been proud of their rich cultural heritage, achievements accomplished and the level of civilization reached in China's long history, felt embarrassed, grieved and outraged that tanks and armed troops had ruthlessly suppressed a peaceful demonstration of unarmed, fellow Chinese. The demonstrators were simply voicing many justifiable wishes for a dialogue with government leaders with the object of fighting corruption and building a more liberal society where the people could have a greater and more effective say in the affairs of the nation. The suppression of the popular demonstration brought general condemnation of the leaders in Beijing by governments and people all over the world, with only a few Communist leaders, like the now executed Ceaucescu of Romania, voicing support. This condemnation was followed by what was as close to economic sanctions as possible, and a general cooling of relations between many Western countries and China. In addition, many government exchange programmes, like the US Fulbright programmes, were stopped. Privately sponsored or arranged exchange programmes continued but with the participants wondering how long they would continue.

The military suppression of the popular demonstration by armed force instead of tear gas, water cannons and batons normally used by riot police actually showed how seriously out of touch the military leaders were, both with the people inside, and

outside China. It was also a public demonstration of weakness, not of strength, as force should only have been resorted to when other methods of persuasion had failed. It was also tantamount to a public admission by the leaders of their failure and loss of respect, and showed how low these leaders had fallen in the esteem of the people. They said that they had showed great patience and forbearance for a long time before giving the order to clear Tian An Men Square, but the fact that a different army was ordered to go to Beijing to carry out the suppression and other facts indicate that it was more likely that there was a serious division of opinion, and that a long debate and a power struggle caused the delay in making the decision. The use of the military showed that it was the conservative military group, the orthodox communists, who won this struggle. It also showed that those who understood international public opinion, those who were closer to the people and understood the needs of the economy, and hence who would oppose military suppression were not able to get the government to use other more peaceful means to solve the political crisis caused by the demonstrations.

For a long time prior to the June 4th crisis, the programme for economic and structural reform had not been going well. Vested interest prevented attempts to decentralize power, and the establishment of a more reasonable government structure and economic system. A market economy could not be established when power, concentrated in the hands of the privileged few led to the system of '*guandao*' or official profiteering, so that a relative of a powerful official could corner any product that could bring big profits. Thus market forces could not operate or even have a chance to operate normally. Instead of increasing production and supply when prices were decontrolled and rising, measures to bring about economic reform actually resulted in bigger profits for some, and the rate of inflation increased so money was actually taken from the pockets of the people and transferred to these privileged few. This may not be a very scientific statement of a complex political and economic situation, but it is how many Chinese people saw it. It also explains why so many people took part in the popular demonstrations.

The weakness of the orthodox communist leaders was further revealed by their orders to ban all 'dangerous liberal bourgeois' literature, as if banning such literature could effectively control and eliminate such 'dangerous' ideas. This was followed by orders to flush out all people who took an active part in the

demonstrations in the stormy days prior to June 4th, as well as reformers and dissidents who had different ideas about a political and economic system. People's Liberation Army officers, cadres and soldiers were sent to universities and colleges and organizations or units where dissidents were suspected of being, to watch, control and where possible to ferret out 'trouble-makers'. In order to 'educate' the people so that they would understand and support the policies of the government leaders, 'political study' sessions were scheduled for all, and the speeches of everyone who took part were analyzed for political ideas and for loyalty. The leaders were particularly anxious to make sure that everyone would understand and support Deng Xiao Ping's speech outlining the Party's views on the crisis.

Meanwhile, what everyone said and did prior to June 4th was, and is, still being checked and counter-checked by secret police, and people suspected or known to have taken an active part are required to give a detailed account of their thoughts and actions and are given a chance to confess their 'crimes'. Some were criticized, while others were charged, tried and sentenced. If at all possible, graduating students were sent to the countryside, so they could be dispersed and more easily dealt with, and prevented from causing trouble in the cities where demonstrations had occurred. Students applying for admission into universities and colleges were carefully screened politically to prevent possible future dissidents from causing trouble. It is said that the new intake into universities and colleges after June 4th was reduced and that those who were admitted were immediately given military training as their first course of studies.

While this was going on, the policies of the Party under the new Politburo, formed after Zhao, the Party Secretary, was ousted, were widely publicized and explained through the media and studied in political study sessions. The need for stability and order was stressed as it was essential for solving the country's economic problems, and so was the need to show strength and firmness in order to put an end to the student demonstrations. The student leaders were named counter-revolutionaries and enemies of the people, and orders to arrest them on sight were issued. Many disappeared; they may be in hiding or they may have been arrested. Travel restrictions were tightened making it very difficult for people to get passports. Even passport holders had to get new exit permits, so that the security forces could examine their political record before allowing them to leave the country.

As for students who want to study abroad, new regulations require college graduates to work five years at the unit to which they are assigned before they can apply for a passport to go abroad to study, and then only if they are allowed to do so by their work unit. An attempt was made to link the popular demonstrations with Western foreign agents and incitement by the foreign media, for example, the Voice of America, and people began to avoid contact with foreigners. In colleges and universities, students and teachers behaved as if they were warned not to have too much contact with foreign teachers. Many working relationships, which had been slowly and painstakingly built up in the previous ten years of reform and had proved so fruitful in research, in improving the quality of teaching and in producing new teaching materials, broke down.

With the cooling of relations between the West and China it is natural to ask: Will China's Open Door policy continue? How will politics affect ELT? Will the Soviet Union regain its former influence in China?

Certainly, in the past, from 1950 to 1955 when relations between China and the West were strained, China had very close relations with the Soviet Union, already bound by the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, new agreements were signed by which the Soviet Union would give China large amounts of economic and technical aid and the Chinese Communist Party launched the "Movement to Learn from the Soviet Union". Will China learn from the Soviet Union again? The Soviet Union, its former leaders, Lenin and Stalin, as well as Bolshevik revolutionary ideas, theories, strategies, tactics and methods, in the past, had been looked upon with reverence by many Communists within the Party. Doubtless, among the supporters of democracy in China, there will be those who have close ties with the Soviet Union and who will point to the growth of democracy in other parts of the world and will urge their leaders to keep up with the times. The reformers must feel heartened to see their views and ideas being echoed by reformers and liberals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and by liberals, human rights groups and democrats in the West. Certainly, the present leaders holding on to their hardline, leftist policies must also feel the increasing pressure on them to change to a more liberal policy. Will they?

Obviously, the present leaders will first think of how changes will affect their position, and their control over the nation. Their

use of the military for suppressing the student demonstrations was probably dictated by this concern, and in addition by their fear of chaos and even civil war. At the same time China's national interest makes it essential to preserve its independence and not rely unduly on any one power. China's geopolitical position requires it to be equidistant in its relations with the great powers of the Soviet Union, Japan and the USA. China's economy and the wishes of both the leaders and the people for modernization which is essential for economic power and for a solution to the old problem of providing for the material needs of the people also require China to have good relations with these three powers as well as with Europe. China needs to develop its foreign trade and acquire the capital needed through loans and investment, and acquire the technology, modern methods of management and know-how for its economic health and growth. Since the West is such an important source, we can believe that China's leaders are sincere when they say that the current policy will continue. It will not be in China's interest nor in the interest of its leaders to go back to the old policies of especially close ties with the Soviet Union when China had the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance. As for following the Soviet Union in its present liberalization, this could only happen if the present leaders are convinced that such policies are demonstrably in China's interest and in the interest of its leaders, but this is far from the case. Probably the best alternative is still the continuation of the current modernization policy as stated in all policy statements of China's present leaders. However, the way this policy will be carried out in future will be different.

Western technology and capital investment and loans will always be welcome because they are not readily available elsewhere, but ideas of liberalism and democracy will not be welcome. These ideas have already been condemned by the present leaders as subversive, so we can expect much stricter control. It will be regarded as a matter of national necessity, sovereignty and pride, and relevant policies and regulations will be strictly enforced; as long as the present rulers remain in power control over these ideas of freedom and civil rights will be regarded as having a direct bearing on the security of the state and their continuing role. The 'carrot' will be the promise of a better life through economic development with a speedy solution to present difficulties.

However, the age old problem remains unsolved: can modern

technology, and modern methods of management be imported from abroad, be properly absorbed and effectively used, and can international cooperation be effectively carried out, when there is strict control over ideas in general and control over entry of foreign ideas in particular? Can ideas and technology really be separated? This is not a matter which can be decided by the present Chinese leaders alone, but involves the willingness of the foreign partners to work under strict control, and the willingness of millions of Chinese technicians, engineers, and executives to also work under this control. The widespread participation by intellectuals in the popular demonstrations prior to June 4th seem to indicate that many, including Chinese technicians, engineers and executives, have wanted change, reform and a more liberal society where they can have more say in the affairs of the nation. Many have felt stifled under the past strict control, and want a freer society where there can be a flow and exchange of ideas so that their creative abilities can be developed and used productively. Some of these intellectuals have voiced their wishes for greater freedom and are now not trusted, and are even regarded as enemies by the present leaders.

Many are Party members themselves and they have trusted the leadership of Deng and Zhao, and have worked hard to find a formula for reform even they are now living and working in the shadow of doubt and distrust. Some of them are suspected of having dissident political views and often what they have said has been taken out of context and criticized. What they have done for reform under directives has not always been recognized and some have even been removed from responsible positions. With such precedents, can intellectuals be expected to work wholeheartedly and efficiently under this system of control? Will they dare to speak freely? Can they work creatively? Or will their instinct for self-preservation be so strong as to permit only the expression of what is safe, or what is likely to please the present leaders? If so, can creative work be expected?

These observations are based on reports available in Macau and Hong Kong, and it would be interesting to see to what extent the authorities in Beijing would allow substantiation by independent observers. The questions are just the kind of questions which Zhao, the deposed Party General Secretary had tried to answer in the past, but had failed. Can his successor be more successful? Under these circumstances, English language teachers, as members of the class of intellectuals, cannot remain

unaffected. It would not be realistic to expect them to work with the enthusiasm and dedication which they had shown in the previous ten years. It would also be interesting to know how the present leaders regard these questions. However, it is certain that as long as the present leaders do not feel they have the real support of the people, especially the intellectuals, they are unlikely to relax controls on ideas.

Since there had been a period of relaxed controls when people were more or less free to speak to foreign visitors, some continuity with old policies has to be preserved. This is likely to be more in name than in fact. Meanwhile, the new leaders will attempt to get acceptance for stricter control through political study and propaganda. New controls are being enforced through the appointment of officials in sensitive sectors and the shake-up of personnel in these sectors. This is happening in the propaganda sector, in the military and the public security sectors, as well as in the United Front organizations, which has charge of intellectuals, overseas Chinese, people classified as capitalists, and other people not considered as belonging to the core or base of communist power.

To get popular support, the present leaders will carry out many policies for control in the name of stability, which they say is necessary for economic development. This will be the common goal which everybody wants and will work for.

The resurgence of democracy in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union will increase the desire of democratic forces in China to struggle for reform and greater freedom. However, it will also increase the desire of the orthodox communists to enforce stricter control. Although they are backed by a powerful military group, their power is checked to the extent by which the people actually support them, and have confidence in their leadership, as well as to the degree to which they really commit themselves to their policies. At present, the so-called 'stability' is probably more the result of a delicate balance of power reached within the Party leadership than the result of support by the people. How future events will affect this balance of power remains to be seen. The world, especially the people of Macau and Hong Kong will be watching developments with concern, particularly events such as the death of certain senior leaders, changes in the balance of power within the leadership, and how these changes affect policies. They will be concerned with how present economic difficulties are being overcome and especially how the present

leaders actually get the confidence and support of the people, who have been sadly disillusioned by corruption and incompetence, as well as the growing distance between present leaders and government officials and the ordinary people. There is also grave concern over the growing selfishness and callous greed of those in power, people who use their influence for private gain or for increasing their power and influence without regard for the current or future public good.

This concern should not be interpreted as pessimism with regard to future developments in ELT in China. ELT may go through a period of difficulty, but anyone familiar with its history is also aware of another aspect; the CCP leaders have always wanted English to be taught. Even in the periods of "Learning from the Soviet Union" when China had no diplomatic relations with its main enemy, the USA, and when relations with the West were strained, English was still taught. Although some junior cadres had called English the language of the imperialists, the leaders had always regarded English as the language of a great people and therefore it had to be learned in order to learn as well as to transmit revolutionary ideas to the West. Now, more than ever, the CCP leaders want the people to learn English well, in order that they can use the language to study and to get the latest technology and science from the West for modernization, and also for doing business.

As regards the ideas that will inevitably come into the country along with the language, of course teachers cannot take all the responsibility. Even if English was not taught, the ideas would still come in. Our world has become extremely small; the media and telecommunications have made information easily available.

In addition, China is committed to the modernization policy as the only practicable policy for national salvation that would get popular support, and so a great many Party leaders and ordinary members have to know Western ideas. They may not want to advertise their thoughts, but to judge from what they have said and done, some of them welcome these ideas for various reasons, some practical, some idealistic. For example, Western ideas of efficiency and know-how in modern management are welcome, because this is just what China needs to strengthen its economy, and efforts will continue to be made to find a way to transplant these ideas and methods onto Chinese soil, at least those concepts that will not arouse opposition on ideological grounds. Pragmatic communists who believe in Marxist dialectical materialism have

said that out of conflict between the ideas of East and West, China will be able to get rid of many backward traditional and feudalistic ideas and progress will come. They have said that communists who believe in Marxism and dialectical materialism should not be afraid. They should have faith that under the leadership of the Party, new and good ideas will be developed, that the best ideas will always win in the end, that an ultimate solution is not brought about by force but by persuasion, and that the Chinese people can and will benefit and grow strong from an exchange of ideas.

This liberal, pragmatic group consists of some of the most active, most intelligent and best educated people in the Party. After the military suppression of the June 4th popular demonstration, the hardline, orthodox, military-backed leaders have gained ascendancy in the power struggle, while Zhao, the Party Secretary who had championed reform, was ousted from power. Although members of this liberal group are now on the defensive and have to act cautiously, they are popular with most of the people and will still be working for reform.

In contrast to the pragmatic liberals, the orthodox hardline conservative left-wing Party leaders who are more or less in control now, stress Party leadership, government control, central planning and stability. They agree that China must have Western technology, Western investments and loans for modernization, so they also want English taught as a means to this end. Yet they have an overriding fear of the influx of Western 'capitalist liberal' ideas, especially the corrupting effect of these ideas on the young intellectuals. They fear these ideas will weaken their faith in communism. Many of the young intellectuals have demonstrated for democracy and want change, and this has heightened the Party's fears and increased the desire for strict ideological control, and so we will see more control and less freedom.

The struggle between these two groups of people has gone on ever since the CCP took power in China, and developments in ELT have to be understood and considered in the light of this struggle. In times of stability, prosperity and popular support for the Party, there will be less ideological control over the content of teaching materials, but in times of political struggle, economic difficulties and relative instability, there will be stricter control. Control over ideas is not peculiar to the hardline orthodox communist leaders. Policy makers in China's past and worldwide

have always been faced with policy problems regarding the influence of foreign culture and ideas on the native population, while teachers of foreign languages will always have to deal with difficulties in understanding and expression caused by differences in culture, differences in habits of thought and ways of expression. In addition, there will always be the question of national identity, the question of pride in one's native culture and the desire to preserve it — issues which have to be considered when the question of rejection or adoption, in part or in whole, of some aspect of foreign culture comes up. China's policies in dealing with this problem will not only be of general interest for its own sake because of the complication caused by communist ideology, but these policies will also be important to the development of ELT.

At present, the policy of control, although distasteful to English language teachers, does not pose a serious problem in the day to day teaching because most teachers have been careful in choosing texts that can be classified as 'politically safe'. The new methods that have been proposed, discussed and adopted by some teachers will be used by more and more teachers in more and more classes, especially if they do not take too much of the teacher's limited time. This is because these methods will be regarded as not connected with political ideology, but will be regarded pragmatically. Those that are most effective will be adopted and used on a wider scale, raising the quality of teaching slowly but surely. We shall probably see a period of slow, steady development and improvement in ELT. However, in view of the difficult economic conditions, the unsettled political situation, and the present unfavourable position in which the teachers, as intellectuals, find themselves, enthusiastic creative work on a large scale is unlikely. However, work will be carried forward by the momentum gained in the past ten years.

More serious is the lack of interest of qualified bright high school graduates to major in ELT and to dedicate their lives to this profession. These graduates, serious in their studies and having achieved a good academic record, will hesitate to go to the prestigious key national universities and study English, knowing that future work assignment depends so much on their political record and their family background, while Party cadres in charge of admissions will be reluctant to admit any bright student who has shown independent thinking, for fear of admitting a future dissident who may cause trouble. If this situation is not corrected

in time, the quality of teachers in colleges in the future will be difficult to guarantee.

Although these bright graduates hesitate to go to college and major in English language studies, there will still be hundreds of millions of people studying English to master this key to knowledge, self-advancement and self-improvement, as well as to study abroad, and so good English teachers will be in great demand for a long time to come.

As for international cooperation and exchange in ELT, an effort will be made to continue programmes of cooperation with the West, but under conditions of control which can satisfy the hardliners. Most likely, these conditions will largely aim at restricting contact and exchange so that it will involve only a limited number of people, with the appropriate political qualifications acceptable to the hardliners. The effort to continue cooperation will be made because some continuation with old policies and decisions must be maintained, and some consideration must be given to public opinion, to the kind of image even hardliners want to perpetuate about China and its government, and to the effects on the availability of foreign investments as well as to the effects on business with the West. However, cooperation will be difficult under policies of control and will also be delayed because so many scholars, professors and teachers in the West, whether overseas Chinese or people of other ethnic origin, do not want to go to China and have dealings with a government that is responsible for the June deaths.

CONCLUSION

From 1949 to 1989, we can observe progress in ELT in China. New and better teaching materials were written and used. Applied linguistics and many new and better teaching methods were studied and used by an increasing numbers of teachers. Excellent teacher training classes and courses were set up all over China in cooperation with professionals from abroad and have opened the eyes of trainees to new possibilities and have laid the basis for future development in this field. Perhaps the most significant development is the formation of a group of professional teachers who have the basic knowledge, training and experience necessary for future development.

However, we have also seen the many constraints under

which these teachers work in China. As in many parts of the world, they know that differences in culture and differences between English and the mother tongue can and do cause many difficulties in teaching and learning the language. These problems have been recognized and are being dealt with, but teachers should take into account the special circumstances, the cultural background and influence, and especially the conditions imposed by the ever-changing political climate. They generally recognize that in their teaching, it is often difficult to separate the language from the culture, and problems caused by cultural differences cannot be ignored. In China, as well as in other countries where ideology, beliefs and cultural factors are very strong, these issues have to be carefully reviewed. The problems of ELT should be studied in the light of its total linguistic, cultural and political environment, to determine the constraints, the difficulties and the special problems that arise from such an environment in order that really effective solutions may be worked out. Solutions theoretically sound linguistically need to be modified in the light of this environment so that they can be effectively carried out.

Leaders in the Party hierarchy have long recognized the importance and the position of English as an international language of communication between nations and peoples. The Party, the government and the people are all convinced of its usefulness and its importance to China's modernization. They are convinced that it is an essential tool for the development of science and technology, social sciences, as well as foreign trade and economy.

However it is equally true that there are grave misgivings about the influx of Western ideas and culture and with more people knowing English and using it better, this influx has been facilitated. These misgivings are not new or something unique to Chinese communists. They have arisen in the minds of leaders and thoughtful people in China's past during the days of the Qing Dynasty and in the minds of people in many cultures where the people are anxious to preserve their cultural heritage and identity.

Attempts to contain or to control Western ideas and culture have been made ever since 1949 when the Communist Party took control by removing imperialist influence in textbooks and later through many political movements, notably the Thought Reform Movement and the Cultural Revolution, through political study group discussions as well as through articles in newspapers and journals, through public lectures and movies and through the

inclusion of chapters and books in many courses of instruction in schools and colleges in normal times. Western ideas have been criticized and condemned. People, young and old, have been warned about the 'decadent Western culture', the 'unsolvable contradictions' in the political and economic system and democratic ideas of the West, and the dangers of these ideas to China. Many attempts have been made to impress upon the people that only socialism and the Communist Party can save China. However, the experience of the 40 years since 1949 shows that ideas cannot be kept out, nor can they be contained or controlled in China, Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union. Facts about achievements in industrial and agricultural production, science and technology, and the rising standards of living in the West came into China and Eastern Europe in an unending stream. Is force and suppression the answer? The events in China and Eastern Europe before and after what happened at Tian An Men Square on June 4th, 1989 show that some serious thinking has to be done about ideas that the present leaders do not approve of. The public demonstrations show that many people in China like the people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union now believe they should have a greater share in making decisions about these ideas than in the past. Many people, including Party members, feel strongly that the people should have a choice about the kind of political and economic system they live under. Certainly this includes choices and decisions about what foreign elements should be absorbed or resisted. In a world that is rapidly growing smaller each day as technology advances, re-thinking, based on understanding and reliable information, needs to be done in China and elsewhere to enable future generations to live happily in a better world.

English language teachers like other foreign language teachers are engaged in the work of solving the problem of accurate transmission of knowledge and information across cultural and language barriers and the problem of avoiding and correcting misunderstandings left to us after the Tower of Babel. These teachers naturally wish that they can do their work more effectively and contribute to better understanding and friendship between the peoples of the world in addition to doing their share in the programme to modernize China. May this book contribute something positive to this work and to the work of all foreign language teachers.

The book provides an extensive introduction and background to the teaching of English in China, and illustrates the developments and approaches with a selection of articles and case studies from Chinese and foreign experts in the field. It provides frank appraisal of both the current and historical situations and offers insights into the effects of communism on language teaching.

The book provides invaluable information for English language teachers worldwide, and is of particular importance to those in China. In addition, it provides a fascinating perspective of the inter-relationships of political, social, economic and cultural factors for anyone interested in China.

The political and academic vicissitudes of the last ten years and the role that English has played in a broader sense are surveyed leading up to the 1989 turmoil, and beyond.

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